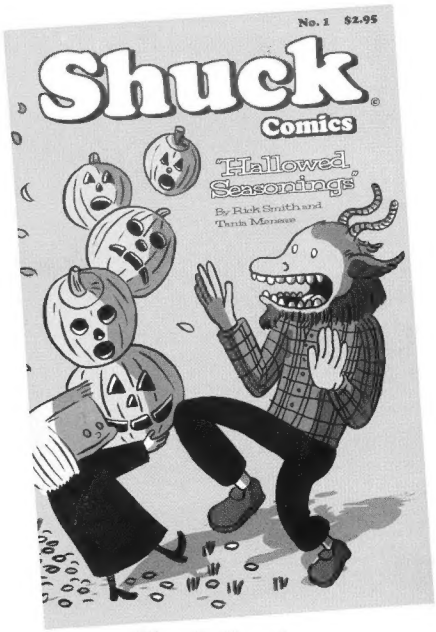
ISSN 0712-7774

# Cerebus Later Days 15

## In the Beginning

280
JUL




## Shuck Comics

**No.1 "Hallowed Seasonings"**
**By Rick Smith & Tania Menesse**
**$2.95 USA**
**No.2 "Purgatory Brews"**
**Scheduled to ship in July**

This I found to be a really charming and enjoyable first effort as self-published black & white comics go. With the *Cerebus* workload increasing month by month, I admit that I'm not reading as many of the complimentary books that come in as I used to (when people ask what I'm going to do when *Cerebus* is done, my attention is always drawn to the foot-high stack of mail on my coffee table. I *do* plan to answer most if not all of them after March, 2004 if, God willing, I actually get there). So, while it was not unusual for me to just flip through *Schuck Comics* No.1, it was unusual for me to start reading it. And even more unusual that I would *finish* it—*particularly* since it is largely written in phonetic dialect which, while not impenetrable, was, to say the least, challenging. It was even more unusual that I've re-read parts of it several times after leaving it out to remind myself to do this here plug. I don't think any explanation could do it justice, but how about: What if Seth and Alan Moore decided to do a ghost story with a George Herriman feel to it?

There. If that doesn't get you to buy a copy I don't know what will. Tell Rick and Tania that Dave sent you.

**Contact the creators at 668 Dexter Street, Denver, Colorado, 80220 or visit http://sulfurstar.com or e-mail: letters @ sulfurstar.com....**

CEREBUS
NO. 280 JULY 2002

**DAVE SIM**
Creator, Writer
Characters/
pencil & ink,
mechanical tones,
lettering

**GERHARD**
Background
Artist/pencil & ink

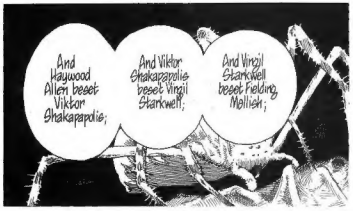
**CHRIS VERHOEVEN**
Cover Technician

**TRACY REID**
Cover Photo

**LATTER DAYS**

•
PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 266
and 267)
•
BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 268 to
288)
•
BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 289 to
300)

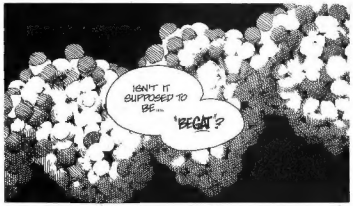
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM INC.
P.O. BOX 1674, STATION C
KITCHENER, ON N2G 4R2
ALL CONTENTS ©2001
DAVE SIM AND GERHARD
PRINTED IN CANADA BY
PRENEY PRINT & LITHO INC.
WINDSOR, ONTARIO

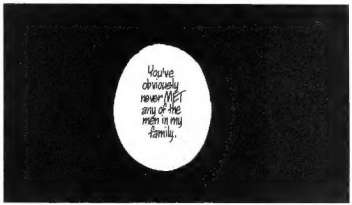

And Haywood Allen beset Viktor Shakapapolis;
And Viktor Shakapapolis beset Virgil Starkwell;
And Virgil Starkwell beset Fielding Mellish;

**Konigsberg,**
**The Not-So-Good Samaritan**

**in association with**

sigh!
And Fielding Mellish beset Allan Felix; And Allan Felix beset the Cowardly Sperm;
(Please. Don't ask.)
And the Cowardly Sperm beset Miles Monroe; And Miles Monroe ...
...what?




**Some Yenta**
**With More Money Than Brains**

**presents**

And Miles Monroe beset Alvy Singer; And Alvy Singer beset Isaac Davis; And Isaac Davis beset Sandy Bates;
And Sandy Bates beset Andrew Hobbs; And Andrew Hobbs

**Konigsberg,**
**The Not-So-Good Samaritan**

beset Leonard Zelig, the Pretty-Good-as-Samaritans-Go-Samaritan ... who them suffered what my people call a "meeege meshina".
"an ugly and unfortunate fate".
?
What was that?
He had me.

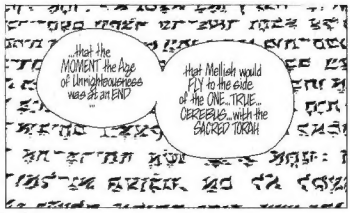
starring in

# Konigsberg,
## The Not-So-Good Samaritan**

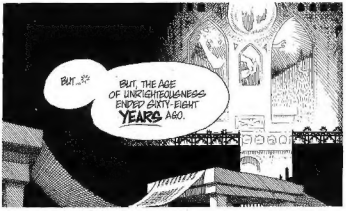
Screenplay by
Konigsberg, The Not-So-Good Samaritan

Adapted from the Stage Play
"Dr. Fräud, Cerebus & Me"
by Konigsberg, The Not-So-Good-Samaritan

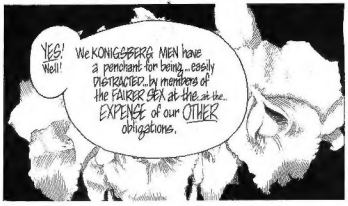
FIELDING Mellish-- The...REALLY-COMING-ALONG-Okay Samaritan --was the KONIGSBERG who actually KNEW the Prophet Rick. RICK on his..
..his DEATHBRANCH..
made Fielding Mellish SWEAR

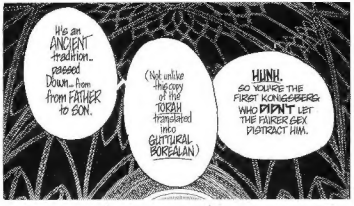

...that the MOMENT the Age of Unrighteousness was at an END
...that Mellish would FLY to the side of the ONE...TRUE... CEREBUS...with the SACRED TOROH

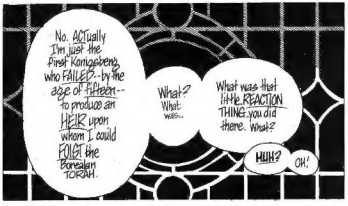
Written by
Konigsberg, The Not-So-Good-Samaritan



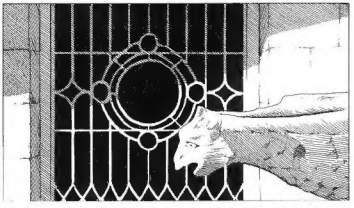

**Directed by**
**Konigsberg, The Not-So-Good-Samaritan**


YES! Well!
We KONIGSBERG MEN have a penchant for being...easily DISTRACTED...by members of the FAIRER SEX...at the...at the... EXPENSE of our OTHER obligations.


It's an ANCIENT tradition... passed Down... from from FATHER to SON.
(Not unlike this copy of the TORAH translated into GUTTURAL BOREALAN)
HUNH. SO YOU'RE THE FIRST KONIGSBERG WHO DIDN'T LET THE FAIRER SEX DISTRACT HIM.


No. ACTually I'm just the first Konigsberg who FAILED...by the age of fifteen--to produce an HEIR upon whom I could FOIST the Borealan TORAH.
What? What was...
What was that little REACTION THING you did there. What?
HUH?
OH!

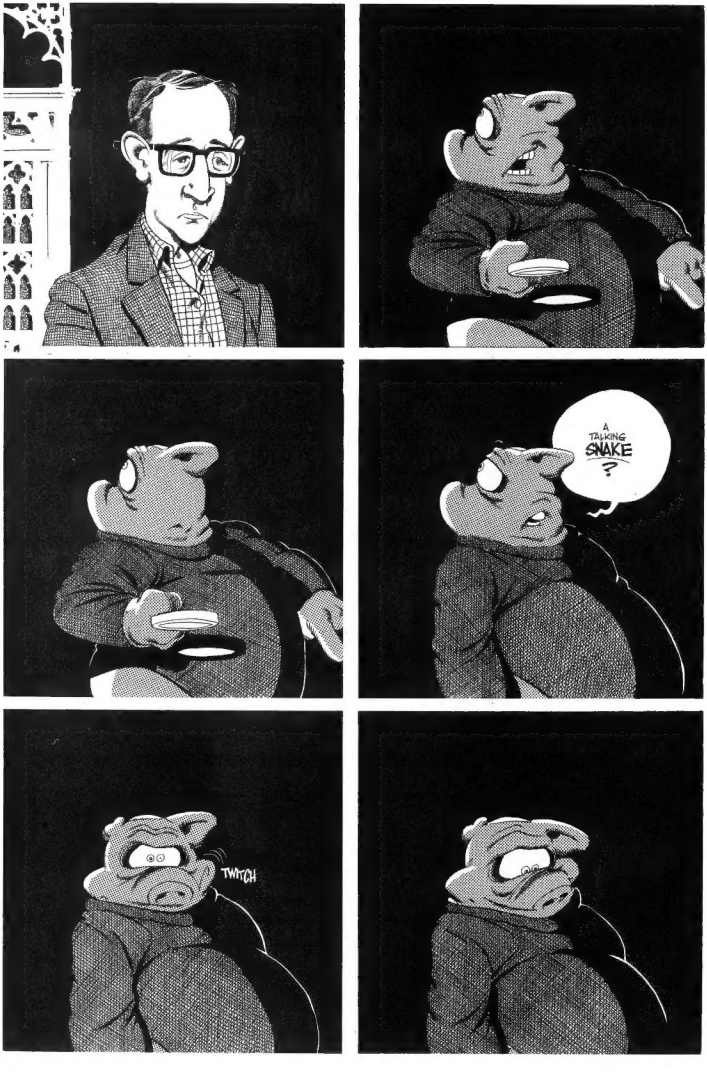
**THE SANCTUARY.**

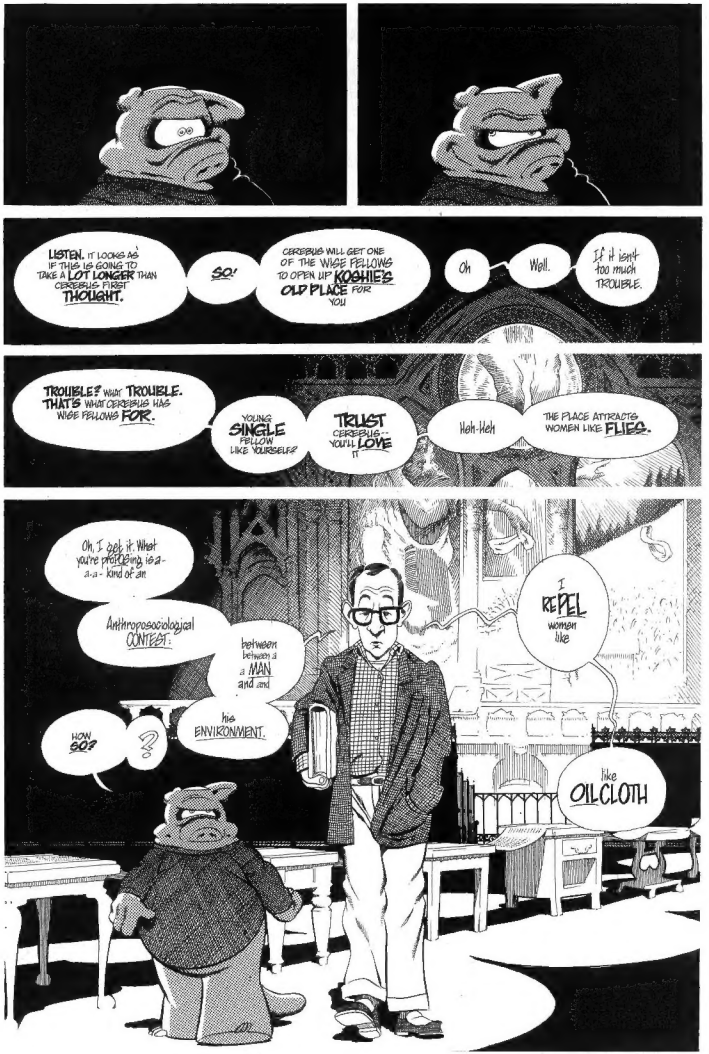


**(soon after three pages of redundant screen credits)**

I'm HARDLY an EXPERT in these matters, but I'm REASONably certain that you're supposed to
UNscroll the Torah from ONE roll... andandand
RE-scroll it
onto the OTHER roll...you know, ONE
one page at a TIME!
MM.
NAY.
CEREBUS' WAY IS BETTER.
LOOK!
...CEREBUS' WAY...
YOU CAN SEE THE WHOLE TRALAH.
Torah.
Well.
Suit yourself.
After All...YOU're the the AUTOCRATIC DESPOT around here
not ME.
THE WHOLE TORAH!
ALL AT ONCE!?
RIGHT!
(?)
EXACTLY.
SIGMUND FREUD
SO.
THIS IS THE BOOK THAT'S GOING TO TELL CEREBUS EVERYTHING!
LET'S HAVE A LITTLE "LOOK-SEE" SHALL WE?
OH! uh
YOU go ahead.
I uh
I prefer to, just you know STAND HERE and
and
"WATCH-STARE".
SUIT YOURSELF.

MM.
MM.
HM.
HAHAHAHAHAH
HAHAHAHAHAH
A TALKING SNAKE!

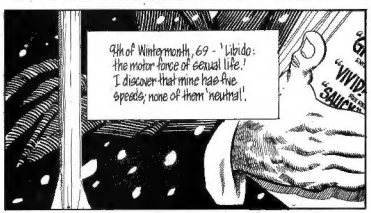

A TALKING SNAKE?
TWITCH


LISTEN. IT LOOKS AS IF THIS IS GOING TO TAKE A LOT LONGER THAN CERBERUS FIRST THOUGHT.
SO!
CERBERUS WILL GET ONE OF THE WISE FELLOWS TO OPEN UP KOSHIE'S OLD PLACE FOR YOU
Oh
Well.
If it isn't too much TROUBLE.
TROUBLE? WHAT TROUBLE. THAT'S WHAT CERBERUS HAS WISE FELLOWS FOR.
YOUNG SINGLE FELLOW LIKE YOURSELF?
TRUST CERBERUS - YOU'LL LOVE IT
Heh-Heh
THE PLACE ATTRACTS WOMEN LIKE FLIES.
Oh, I get it. What you're proposing is a- a-a - kind of an
Anthroposociological CONTEST:
between a MAN and the ENVIRONMENT.
HOW SO?
?
I REPEL women like
like OILCLOTH

30th of Steve, 68 - My DREAM has come true. Thanks to C. I am now able to withdraw from the outside world COMPLETELY so as to devote myself SOLELY to the study of the immortal writings of Sigmund Freud, the Father of modern psychotherapy. I feel quite certain that a PROFOUND DESTINY awaits me as I begin to unlock the Secrets of the Master's Imperishable Wisdom - Wisdom which he had KNOWN - from the outset - would transform the VERY NATURE of HUMAN EXISTENCE for ALL TIME!! Wisdom which he had developed and honed over many years in SCRUPULOUS ISOLATION from a world that thought him MAD (or, at least, a world that thought him a sexual degenerate with a terrible 'potty mouth')

At random, as my starting point, I select his paper 'On Narcissism: An Introduction'. IMMEDIATELY, my eye is drawn to his description of PARAPHRENICS and their two distinguishing characteristics: one, their MEGALOMANIA and two, their COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL from the outside world.

I am seized by a bout of psychosomatic indigestion so severe that even bicarbonate of soda is HELPLESS before its imaginary intestinal onslaught!

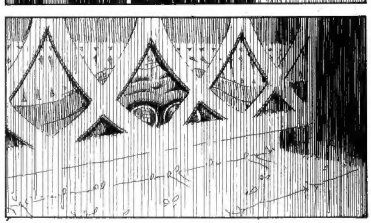


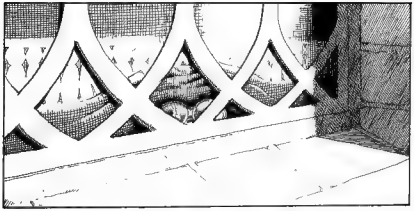
4th of Springmonth, 69 - PROGRESS! My LATENCY PERIOD which began when I was six months old seems (finally!) - at the age of thirty - to be tapering off into the Phallic Stage of Organization, marked by the libido's quest for OBJECT SELECTION!

'So MUCH libido,' I think to myself. 'So FEW Objects.' My psychic energy craves a Displacement Cathexis with every ... wiggly ... jiggly ... female anatomical accouterment in view.

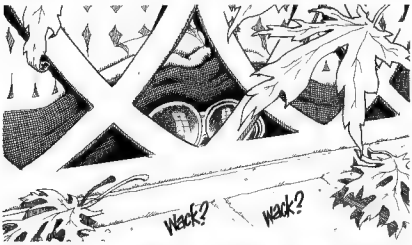
Let US be the Wet Monkey Object Selection of your Narcissistic Libido Love Dreams,' they seem to moan. 'Park your Infantile Anxiety Phantasies next to OUR Incest Barriers. Let US be your Symptom Creators!'

(as Milk-Producing Glandular Organs go, I find them astonishingly well-read when it comes to the latest psychoanalytical terminology)

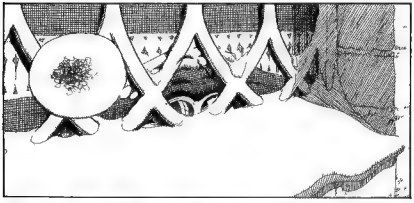




12th of Summermonth, 69 - I am struck by Dr Fraud's observation: "In youth, a whore; in old age, a devotee." I have no idea what it means, but spend much of the day composing lengthy letters of application and then wondering, who to send them to

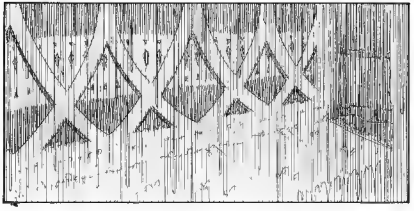



13th of Steve, 69 - Today the unthinkable happened! A female visitor wanting to see Koshe's old studio! At a loss for conversation, I share with her yesterday's journal entry: *'Long hours of Word Association convince me that my childhood was filled with Pogenerative Morbid Manifestations which Infantile Amnesia have obliterated from my Pre-conscious Mind... Spelaeperle!'* She suddenly remembers a hair appointment and leaves. Although aware that The FATES are merely the residue of Collective Tribal Neuroses, still I resolve to curse them with my dying breath.



20th of Wintermonth, 70 - Shh wounded by the loss of my female warrior I begin manifestering Resistance against Dr Fraud's teachings: spelling 'Fetish' with an 's' and Phantasy with an 'F'. This morning, I hesitated for several seconds before putting the umlaut over the 'a' in his name. I feel the chasm of Pathogenic Repression opening at the metaphorical feet of my Psychic Mechanism.

8th of Springmonth, 70 - One of the Substitute Wise Fellows delivers a note from C, thanking me for leaving him no other option but to spend most of the last year studying the Torah...and waiting me over on the 9th to listen as he dictates his commentaries on the first chapter of the First Book of Moshe



9th of Springmonth, 70 - Re-reading C.'s note for the hundredth time I grow still more convinced that re.ie manifestering, a displacement of his Oedipal Urges from his Real Father onto me. I resolve to remain calm, but am frankly terrified by the knowledge that C unconsciously wants to kill me...and marry the tube of petroleum jelly in the drawer of my nightstand.

Me
You want me to polish it as we go along? Or just write down everything you say and fix it later?

Cerebus
Write down everything Cerebus says and he'll fix it later

Me
Okey-dokey

Cerebus
[clears throat]

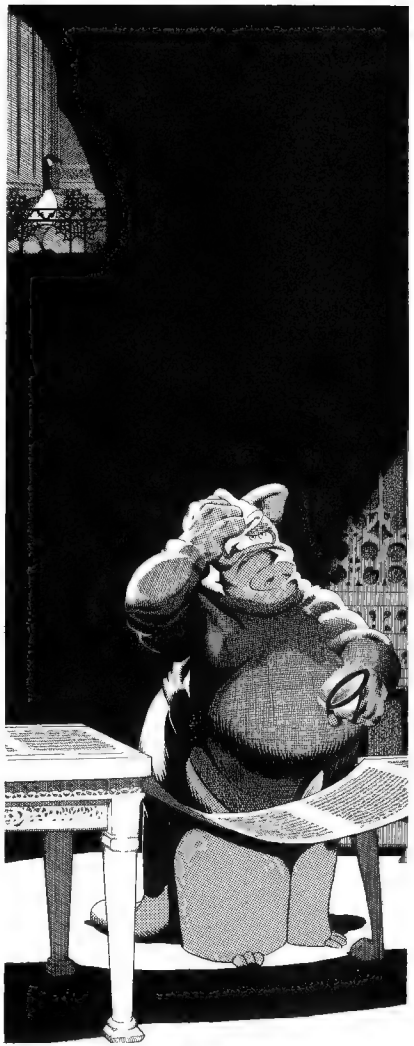
Me
You want me to write in things like you clearing your throat like you just did there? Or when you're thinking about what you're going to say next?

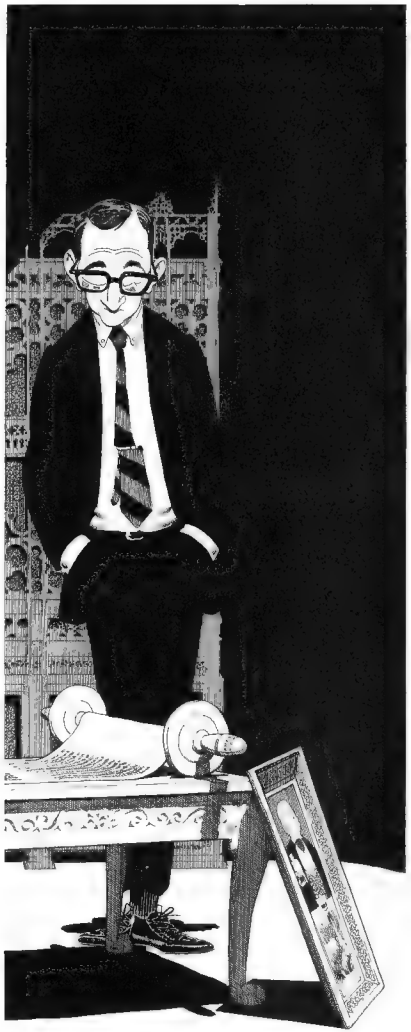
Cerebus
Aye. [thinks] Only don't write down things that make Cerebus sound stupid like, you know. [farts]. that.

Me
Okey-dokey

Cerebus
Okay [clears throat] [reading] "*In the beginning, God created the Heauen and the Earth* " [thunks] What *this* means is [thunks] that…[thunks] God created the Heaven and the Earth [thinks] .And that God *did so* . [clears throat] ..in the begunning. Okay. [reading] "*And the earth was without forme.*" What *this* means is [thunks] that the earth was . was [scrunching up his face] .sort of [unscrunching his face] ..*a mess*. All over the place. You. know. Like a . a *cake* . that hasn't been baked yet. [thunks] So, it's just sort of this ..lumpy [thinking about it] *mess* Okay [reading] "*And voyd and darkenesse vpon the face of the deepe* " What *this* means is [thunks] that all *around* the lumpy mess—it was.. black. and *dark* [thinks] *Really* black [thinks some more] and *really* dark. The Deep As God says later on in the tenth chapter of the *Second* Book of Moshe, darkness so dark that [wanders down to chapter ten] [reading] *"one may feele darknesse"* [wanders back] *Really* heavy . *really* thick and *really* deep Like when you dive down into the water too far? And it feels like your head is going to cave in? And sometimes you get, maybe, a nosebleed? Like *that* but much, much thicker and heavier .[reading] *"And the Spirit of God mooued vpon the face of the waters."* God's Spirit moves upon The Deep [thinks about it] Not the *Deepest* part of the Deep After all, God's Spirit doesn't want its head to cave in or to get, maybe, a nosebleed. Nay God's Spirit moves , on the "face *of the waters*". Sort of.. [clears throat] *rubbing* ..[clears throat] against the *face* of the waters because [clears throat] evidently it [clears throat again]. .uh…*feels good* for God's Spirit to uh *"moove on the* ' uh [clears throat again] "face *of the…"* .. uh [pause] ..uh. SO!

Moving right along [reading] "*And God said, Let there be light And there was light And God saw the light that good* " Now, what *this* means is that God said, "Let there be light." And what it *also* means is. that God *saw* the light. And, uh, what it *also* means is that *God* .when God, you know, *saw* the light that, uh, God thought that the light was, you know, a *good* thing And, uh, God *said* so "Light? That good!" [thinking] Like God's Spirit moving on the face of the waters It was, you know, *good*. God *liked* it. And, uh, God's *Spirit* liked it. A *lot* And, we can assume from what it says that the light was kind of a, uh, [thinks] a, uh what's the word Cerebus is looking for?



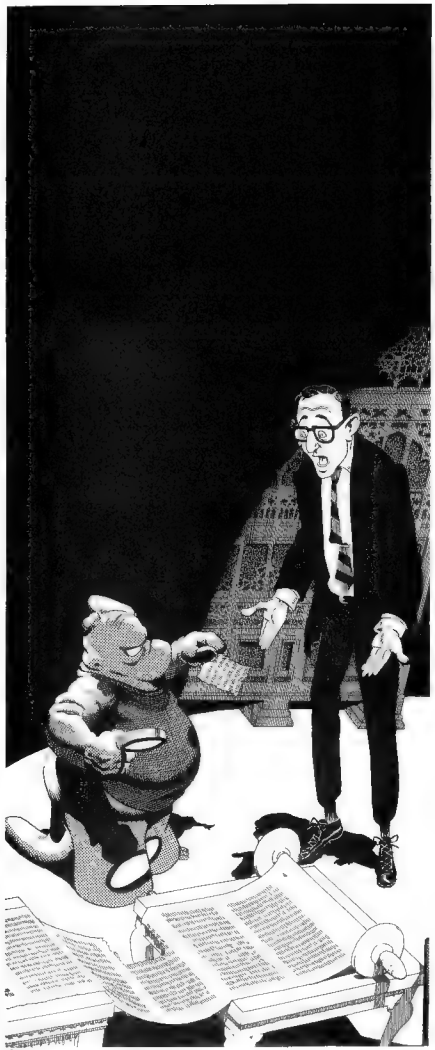


Konigsberg
A…a [thinks] by-product'

Cerebus
Yes. Thank you. A *by-product* of God's Spirit really, really…*moving*…on the face of the waters [gulps] [long pause] [suddenly stern] In Cerebus' opinion trying any harder to *explain* [gulps] *"mooued"* . would just be [too loud] *RUDE!* [clears throat] Rude. [thinks] and probably get all of us *fried* by a *big lightning bolt So!* Cerebus is just going to leave it at that. *"Mooved"* Period. [clears throat] Okay. [mops brow with handkerchief] *Moving right along*. [checks to see if either of us is going to say anything neither of us does] [reading] "*And God dauided betweene the light and betweene the darknesse* " What *this* means is as…uh . as tends to happen when [clears throat] something really gets [clears throat]…*moving* ..on. uh ..on the *face* of.. uh…something *else* ..*part* of God *separates* from God. [thunks] Or, [thinks] *part* of God s *Spirit* separates from God's *Spirit*. It doesn't say [clears throat] [mops brow] *which* ..part of God's Spirit separated from God's Spirit or ..*which*. part of God separated from God, and this [clears throat] *potentially*—brings us into [clears throat] very, very—[too loud] POTENTIALLY RUDE AREAS So, un uh Of course later *on*. in the *Second* Book of Moshe, it turns out that it was nothing like that at all So we can . *ALL*. just completely. *IGNORE ANY rude thoughts* [emphatic] ANY rude thoughts [really emphatic] AT *ALL!* THAT *ANY OF US MIGHT* BE HAVING! [looks menacingly at Konigsberg and then at me]. So, okay [reading] "*And God called the light, Day, and the darknesse he called Night* " What *this* means is. that God decided to call the light, Day [thinks] And what it *also* means is: that God decided to call the *darkness* .*Night* [reading] "*And the evening was and the morning was the first day*

Now this is really where the whole argument starts…which .[thinks] [starting over] See, because *ordinarily*—thinking about day and night you or Cerebus would say it the other way around, right? "The *morning* was and the *evening* was " You know a Day *starts* with the morning and *ends* with the evening. The fact that this is *not* true is God's point [thinks] *One* of God's points The *evening*—Night *God*, the *elder* being –comes first The *morning* Day, the *light*, the *younger* being came *after* God The part of God that separated *from* God or the part of God's Spirit that separated *from* God's Spirit and that is ..NOW *inside* the light [thinks] [sighs] .has *no* idea how it got in there Or. just in general. *what* the heck is going on. So God helpfully tries to explain. Each one of the "days' in the first chapter of the Book of Moshe— is part of God's explanation. Okay. So [reading] *'And God said, Let there be an Expansion in the midst of the waters and let it diuide the waters from the waters* Here? God has turned his attention to the mess the lumpy-cake-mix-that's-all-over-the-place-that will, when-God-is-done-with-it-become the earth [reading] "*And God made the Expansion, and diuided the waters, which vnder the Expansion, from the waters, which aboue the Expansion and it was so* " Here? God intentionally makes His first thing An Expansion As God would be the first to admit, He didn't *make* the Light He [clears throat] *"mooued* ' in a way which *caused* things to happen that *caused the light to appear* and after His Spirit was done [clears throat] *"mooving"* He said, *"LET there* BE *light"* See, God knows that the *part* of Him that has separated *from* Him or the *part* of His Spirit that has separated *from* His Spirit and which is now *inside the light* is very touchy when it comes to whether or not the Light was *created* or was

always there, so God is being very careful how he puts it. But now, now God *makes* His first thing. God *makes* an *Expansion*—that is, God *makes* the *air* that will *surround* the earth, the *air* that is—take Cerebus' word for it—much, much, much, much, *much lighter* than the heavy, thick, black so-dark-you-feel-like-your-head-is-going-to-cave-in-and-you're-going-to-get-maybe-a-nosebleed-dark-darker-darkest waters *above* the Earth's atmosphere. See, air is lighter than water, in the same way that the waters *under* the Expansion are lighter than the waters *above* the Expansion. Anyway, God makes the air and puts it *around* the earth, *in between* the waters that *we know*, the Seas, and the *heavy-thick-black-head-cave-in-nosebleed* waters out in space. "*And God called the Expansion, Heaven*" which is as good a name for it as any. Besides which, God created it so He can call it whatever He wants, right? "*And the evening was and the morning was the second day.*" Notice that God doesn't see the Heaven and say that the Heaven is good. The Heaven isn't good or bad. It's a bunch of air that separates the waters from the waters. Now. You see what God is doing? He's showing the Light who God and the Light are relative to each other. What God is telling His confused separated part or His Spirit's confused separated part is: God is *like* the waters *above* the expansion, *above* "heaven." That is, God is *like* the thick darkness. And the part separated from God or the part of God's Spirit separated from God's Spirit that is now *inside* the light is like the waters *below* the Expansion God has made. God is telling the separated part of Himself "*I'm* really *big* and *heavy* and *thick* and *dark* and *you* are *little* and *light* and *thin*." God goes on: [reading] "*And God said, Let the waters vnder the heauen be gathered together vnto one place and let the dry land appeare and it was so.*" God makes another example *inside* his first example. Not only has he divided the waters *from* the waters—so as to show the light which one of them is which—but he then gives the order for all the *little* and *light* and *thin* waters to all be gathered into one place *under the heaven* and poof, like a magic trick, the *dry land, the earth* appears. What God is saying is that God did not *make* the light. What God is saying is that—in the same way that God causes all the *little and light and thin* waters to be gathered into one place *under* the heaven so that the *earth* can appear—in *just that way, above* the heaven, that is, *out in space*—a long, long, long, *long time ago*—God caused all of the *thick, heavy, dark head-cave-in-nosebleed* waters to be gathered into one place and, poof, like a magic trick, the *light* had appeared. [reading] "*And God called the drie land, Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called hee, Seas: and God saw that good.*" What God is saying is that the Earth is a good thing, just like the light. It was well worth getting the Seas the heck out of the way so the *Earth* could appear, the same as it had been well worth moving on the thick, heavy, dark waters so the *light* could appear. "It was a very good idea," says God. "It's *still* a good idea." God is making no apology for [clears throat] "*mooving*"... Okay. Next. [reading] "*And God said, Let the Earth bring foorth tender grasse, the herb yeelding seed, the fruit tree, yeelding fruit after his kinde, whose seed in it selfe, vpon the earth and it was so.*" Same deal as with the light: God doesn't have to *do* anything. He just lets nature takes its course: "*Let* there be light." "*Let* the Earth bring foorth." And the Earth *does*, as the next verse tells us: "*And the earth brought foorth tender grasse, herbe yeelding seed after his kinde, and the tree yeelding fruit, whose seed in it selfe, after his kinde and God saw that good.*" The point God is making is that the earth is capable of making things, *too*. In the same way that *God* made the *heaven*—the earth's atmosphere—the *earth* is capable of making its *own* grass, its *own* herbs and its *own* trees. And the grass and the herbs and the trees are *good*, says God. The earth makes *good* grass, *good* herbs and *good* trees. That's *one* of God's points. Another one of God's points, here, is that Only God is God. God is saying that the part of God that separated *from* God or the part of God's Spirit that separated *from* God's Spirit—which is now *inside* the light as well as *inside* the waters under heaven as well as *inside* the earth—is *not* God. What God is saying is that the part of God that separated from God or the part of God's Spirit that separated from God's Spirit—relative *to* God—is *like* grass, *like* herbs, *like* trees are—*relative to* the earth. See, God is saying: the earth grows its grass, but the grass it grows doesn't grow a new earth. God is saying: the earth grows its herbs which grow their own seeds which, in turn, grow more herbs—but the herbs don't grow a new earth and the seeds that the herbs grow don't grow a new earth. God is saying: the fruit tree grows fruit that contains its seed within itself, but the tree doesn't grow a new earth, the fruit doesn't grow a new earth and the seed inside the fruit doesn't grow a new earth. In the same way, God—when His Spirit [clears throat] "*mooued*" upon the face of the waters—did not grow a New God. There is only One God and the part of God that separated *from* God or the part of God's Spirit which separated *from* God's Spirit and which is *inside* the light, *inside* the waters, *inside* the earth is *not* God and is *not* a *New* God. *This!* [he finally remembers to exhale] is the crux of the very, very, very long argument that God is having with the part that separated from Him or the part of His Spirit that separated from His Spirit. And this [thinks] concludes God's *third* example of his point. [reading] "*And the euening and the morning were the third day.*" Okay [tears the next section out]. This part, this part doesn't belong in here. What's-his-name from the second chapter [checks] "the man", "adam". Adam must've put this in here.



Konigsberg
What are you doing? You can't just... just...*tear out* part of the Torah!

Cerebus
[handing him the piece] Cerebus just did.

Konigsberg
[looking at it in vague horror] I stand corrected. [thinks] No, wait. I mean, tearing something out of the Torah [thinks] it's—it's [thinks] well, at the very least, it's *bad theology*.

Cerebus
[thinks] No it isn't. [thinks] It's common sense. Look. God just told the earth to bring forth grass and herbs and trees, right? Which the earth does. And then, all of a sudden, for the next event God makes *two great lights*? In the middle of making his point that there is only One God? *That's* bad theology. Besides, God already said, way, way back here, "*Let* there be light," admitting that he didn't *create* the light. [thinks] And even if he *had*, He would only have had to create the light *once*, right? If you invent, say, "the chair," okay? A thing for people to sit down on?

Konigsberg
Yes. I understand the concept of a chair.

Cerebus
Exactly. You come up with the *concept* of a chair. You don't say, "This morning I *invented* 'the chair'" and then two days later—say, "I just *invented* two more 'the chairs'." "The chair' is a concept." Letting "The light" *be* is a concept.

Konigsberg
But... but... what makes you think *Adam* put it in there?

Cerebus
[thinks] Who do *you* think passed all of these Books down? It was probably the first good-and-bad thing Adam heard in his head after he ate the bad fruit from the good-and-bad fruit tree. So, full of bad fruit, he put "the two lights" crap in after the only reference to fruit trees and fruit that he could find in the first chapter.

Konigsberg
I don't get it. *Who* told Adam that the...

Cerebus
Look. This is going to take *forever* if you keep interrupting. [reading the scroll to himself for a minute or two] Look. [grabbing Konigsberg by the arm and pointing at the scroll] Look how much *better* it reads *without* Adam's bad-fruit-story about inventing the two lights. Read it now that Cerebus has taken the bad fruit stuff out. God says, let the *earth* bring forth tender grass, herbs and trees, which the earth does. Right? Right. Now, what's the *next logical thing for God to do?* The next logical thing is to tell the *Seas* to do the same thing. Right? Right. [reading] "*And God said. Let the waters bring foorth aboundantly the moving creature that hath soule and fowle may flie above the earth in the face of the Firmament of heaven.*" See, God's trying to make the earth *feel* better.

Konigsberg
He *is*?

Cerebus
Of course. See, what God is telling the earth is that the waters *can't* bring forth their own living things. Not like the *earth* can. God says, let the earth bring forth grass and herbs and trees and that's all it takes. Grass, herbs and trees as far as the eye can see. Good vegetation. "Congratulations, earth." But the waters? The waters are just stupid waters. God can tell the waters until He's blue in the face to bring forth their living things and they're just going to stupidly lap up and down against the shoreline. So [reading] "*And God created great whales, and euery liuing creature that moueth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kinde, and euery winged foule after his kinde: and God saw that good.*" God makes the living things, the great whales, the fish, the creeping things. Himself. Because if God *doesn't* do it, it isn't going to get done. God is saying that—while the earth is definitely *not* God—the earth is better than the waters because the earth *can* create living things. Only grass and herbs and trees, sure. But *still* actual, multiplying living things—and the waters *can't*. Of course [chuckles] God tries to pull a fast one with the whales. We're getting to that part. Also, notice the "*his* kind" and "*their* kind." The earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed after *his* kind, the tree yielding fruit after *his* kind. Whose seed in *it* self. *He* and *it*. The grass is just grass. The grass is an *it*. The herb is a *he*. The fruit tree is a *he*. The fruit is an *it*. When God gets around to making the living creatures that move, the waters bring them forth after *their* kind. What's the definition of "their"?

Konigsberg
Uh. Third person plural? [thinks] Possessive pronoun?

Cerebus
If that means "his, hers and its" then you're right. The waters are "he waters, she waters and it waters."

Interchangeable. Stupid. Not good or bad. "It" The winged fowl, birds, on the other hand are *he*-birds "After *his* kinde". *Which* is not to say that there aren't *female* birds. There *have* to be because the very next thing God says is, [reading] "*And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the Seas.* " Note, be *fruitful* "Reproduce yourselves, he-birds, as even the lowest *it* .fruit does, and as even the highest…God's Spirit ..did."

God is saying that every *he* and *it* is fruitful, no matter *how* stupid *he* and/or *it* is The seed is in you Let it separate from you and create life—just as *part* of God separated from God or *part* of God's *Spirit* separated from God's *Spirit* and went into the light This leads to God's *next* example [reading]" *and let foule multiply in the earth*". "*In* the earth" Not *on* the earth. God *makes* birds, which fly in *the face* of the firmament of heaven just like God's Spirit moved on *the face* of the waters. And just like the part of God's Spirit that went *into* the Light, the birds' spirits multiply *in* the Earth God, knowing how much the earth is going to *like* this—in the same way that God's Spirit liked moving on the face of the waters and liked going into the light [thinks about it] which is to say, a *lot*—God tells the birds, you know, make *lots and lots and lots of birds!* Because every time a bird flies through the face of the firmament of heaven, its spirit flies through the Earth and the Earth gets to feel a *little* bit of what God's Spirit *moving* on the face of the waters—and going *into* the light -felt like to God or to God's Spirit. [reading]"*And the evening and the morning were the fift day.* " Okay Next [reading]

"*And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kinde, cattell, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth, after his kinde: and it was so.*" Here? God challenges the earth. God told the Seas to bring forth *their* living things and they couldn't do it, right? So God had to create all of the fish and the birds himself. So, now God says to the earth, "If *you're* God or you're *like* God,"—which is really what the argument is all about that God is having with the part that separated from Him or separated from His Spirit—"then do what I, God, just did. make living, *moving* things come out of the *earth* the way I just made living, *moving* things come out of the Seas." And the earth can't do it. Which is another one of God's points. The earth can make grass and herbs and trees, but the earth *can't* make living, *moving* creatures. So, God makes them *for* the earth [reading] "*And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattell after their kind and every thing that creepeth upon the earth, after his kinde: and God saw that good.*" All of the moving creatures—except the cattle—are *he*. The cattle, on the other hand, are interchangeably he, she and it [thinks about it]. Basically? Cattle are living, breathing, walking, moving *fruit*. They are "Its." You know, like the waters. They aren't good or bad. They just *are*. But, that's *okay*. In fact, it's *good*, says God, that they aren't good or bad. Living, breathing, walking, eating, sleeping *fruit* is a *good* thing Like the light and the Earth and the Seas are good [thinks] Just "good" in a *different way*. Okay. So, you would figure at this point that God would be finished for the day, but in figuring that, you would be wrong [reading] "*And God said, Let us make man in our Image, after our likenesse:*" What God is saying to the earth, and to the part of God that separated from God or the part of God's Spirit that separated from God's Spirit and which is *inside* the light and *inside* the earth is "Now, *this* time, for *this* 'day,' *you and I— together*—will make the *next* example of the relationship which exists between us." But before he goes ahead and makes the example Himself—having already proven that the earth is only capable of making grass and herbs and trees—God says, "And

we'll make a deal. Once we have made these two entities, let's you and I agree to..."[reading] "*..let them haue dominon ouer the fish of the sea, and ouer the foule of the aire, and ouer the cattell, and ouer all the earth, and ouer euery creeping thing that creepeth vpon the earth.*" And while the part of God that separated from God or the part of God's Spirit that separated from God's Spirit is mulling over the offer, God goes ahead with His plan [reading] "*So God created man in his owne Image, in the Image of God created hee him, male and female created hee them.*" And just like with the birds—whose spirits, whose souls fly around inside the earth—even as the birds themselves are flying around in the "*face of the firmament of heauen.*" God makes the man and the female-of-the-man for the same reason, except that—because *they* can't *fly*—*their* souls, *their* spirits will be *walking* around, upside down, *in* the earth [reading] "*And God blessed them, and God said vnto them, Be fruitfull, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*"

[to Konigsberg] That reminds Cerebus. Are you *sure* the First Book of Moshe is the *earliest* book you've got?

Konigsberg
Oh, definitely [thinks] Why?

Cerebus
Well, because when God says, "replenish the earth," that's the same thing He says at the start of chapter nine, after the flood. So, obviously, this is, like, an on-going thing. This is the way things always start—the way they start in this first chapter or the way they start after the flood—with God telling the new people to replenish the earth. And then things go wrong and there's this big catastrophe of some kind and all of the living things on the earth.. you know...*die*...in some big disaster or other and as a result the earth *loses* all of the spirits of the birds and the animals and the people and then its time to [chuckles] "fill the earth up" again. [thinks about it] So, Cerebus was just, you know, wondering what it was that happened to all the birds and the animals and the people *before* the start of the First Book of Moshe.
Where *was* Cerebus?

Me.
Verse 28. "*..and replenish the earth*"

Cerebus
Oh, aye, aye, aye. "*...and subdue it.*" "*It.*" Which is bad news for the earth because by describing the earth as "it," God is saying that the earth is like the waters.. or the fruit...or the *walking* fruit, the cattle. The earth is not being an intelligent "*he.*" God is saying, the earth is being a stupid "*it*". Which God probably has a good point, since the earth doesn't take God up on His deal.

Konigsberg:
*Deal?*

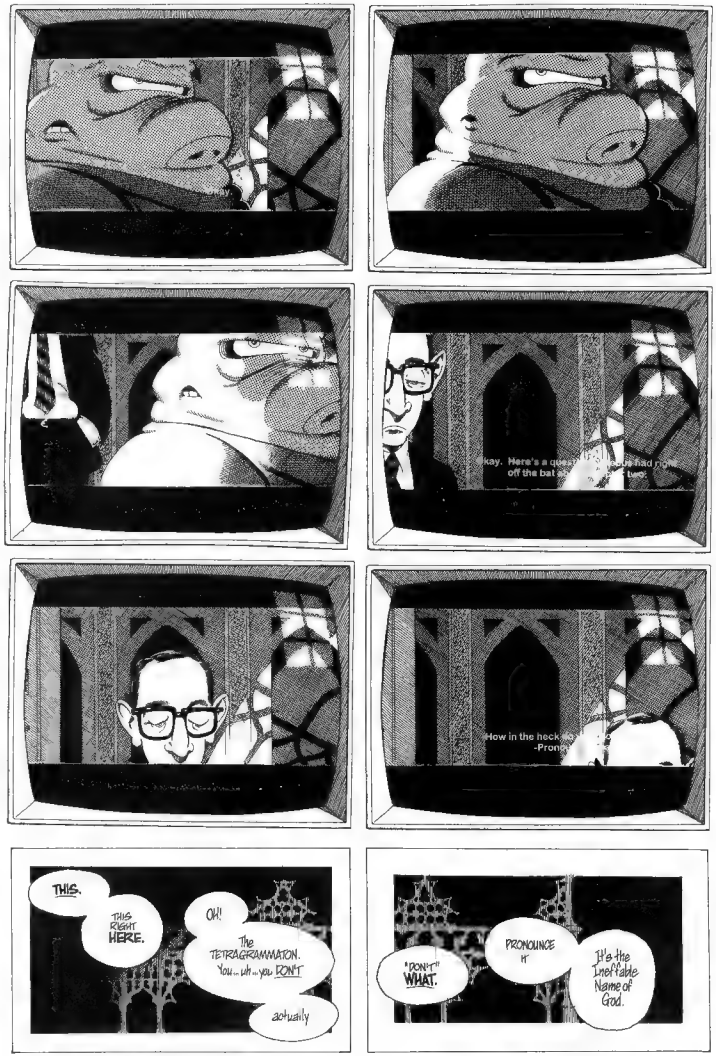
Cerebus.
Aye, the offer that God makes in verse 26. Compare it with the "*done* deal" in verse 28 where God says, let *them*—"them" meaning the man and the female-of-the-man. [reading]: "*.. haue dominion ouer the fish of the sea, and ouer the foule of the aire, and ouer euery liuing thing that creepeth vpon the earth.*" See, the earth only takes God up on *part* of God's deal.

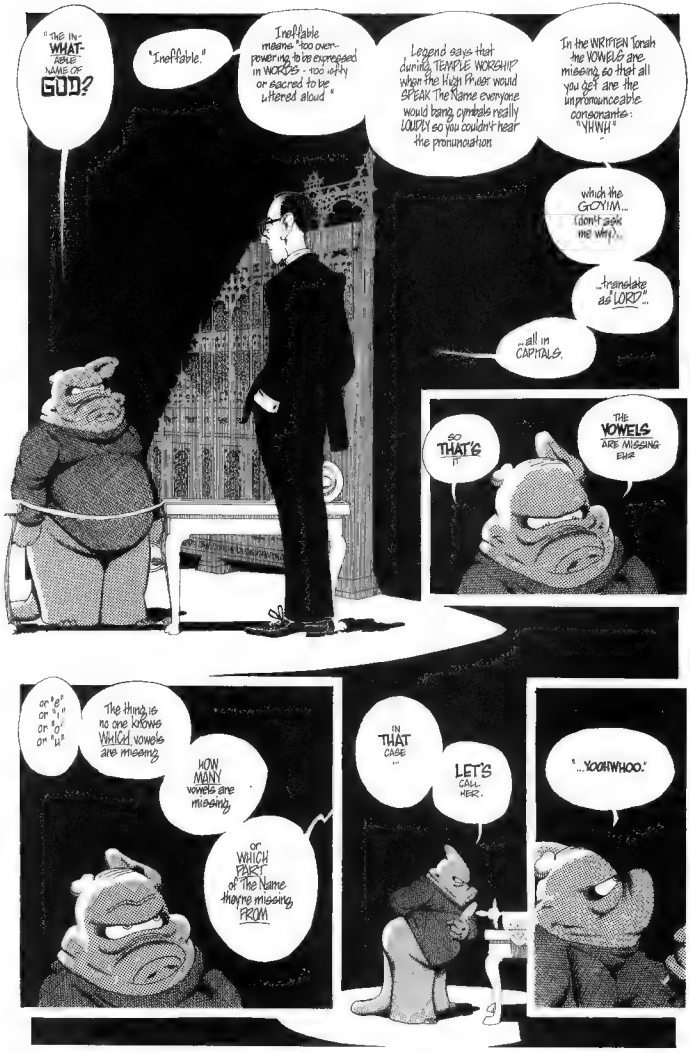
Konigsberg
Part of the deal.

Cerebus
Aye. The part of God that separated from God or the part of God's Spirit that separated from God's Spirit and, which is *inside* the earth *agrees* but leaves out two big parts: the earth *doesn't* agree to give the man and the female-of-the-man dominion over the *earth* or the *cattle*. Which is why God tells the man and the female-of-the-man that they are going to have to "*subdue*" the earth on their *own*. [thinks] Cerebus is writing a directive on that to be sent out to all the sanctuaries. Also, the great whales—being mammals—don't qualify as fish, so the man and the female-of-the-man wouldn't have gotten dominion over the great whales under the terms of God's original deal, anyway. This is the "fast one" God tries to pull on the separated part of God or of God's Spirit that He calls "Day". If "Day" had gone for the original deal, that would've given the man and the female-of-the-man dominion over everything *except* the great whales. See, the whales are "of God": out of all the living, moving creatures on the earth or in the Seas, they resemble God the most. *Big. Really* big. *Dark. Really* dark. *Thick. Really* thick. They move like the deep, like the dark waters above the atmosphere, but they're alive. [thinks for a long while] Okay. [reading] "*And God said, Behold, I haue giuen you euery herbe seeding seed, which vpon the face of all the earth, and euery tree, in the which the fruit of a tree yeelding seed, to you it shall be for meat. And to euery beast of the earth, and to euery foule of the aire, and euery thing that creepeth vpon the earth, wherein there a liuing soule, euery green herbe for meat. And it was so.*" What God is saying here is: since the earth didn't *make* the cattle but refuses to give the man and the female of the man dominion *over* the cattle, well, God decides to just give all of the herbs growing out of the earth and every tree growing out of the earth to the man and the female-of-the-man and the animals and the creeping things that God created. [chuckles] You know, what's the *earth* going to do about it? Of course, technically, God only gave them the *trees* for food. The trees are "he" trees. "Of God". The fruit is "it" fruit. "Of the separated part of God or separated part of God's Spirit" [reading] "*And God saw euery thing that hee had made, and behold, very good. And the euening and the morning were the sixth day.*"

Okay, so that's *God's* version of how everything got started. Next we have...[peers intently at the scroll][stands up][peers intently at the scroll again] Okay. Here's a question Cerebus had right off the bat about chapter two [points at verse 4] How in the heck do you *pronounce* this?

Konigsberg
Pronounce what?




"THE IN-WHAT-ABLE NAME OF GOD?
"Ineffable."
Ineffable means "too overpowering to be expressed in WORDS - too iffy or sacred to be uttered aloud."
Legend says that dunno, TEMPLE WORSHIP when the High Priest would SPEAK The Name everyone would bang cymbals really LOUDLY so you couldn't hear the pronunciation.
In the WRITTEN Torah the VOWELS are missing, so that all you get are the unpronounceable consonants: "YHWH"
which the GCY!M... (don't ask me why)...
...translate as "LORD"...
...all in CAPITALS.
SO THAT'S IT
THE VOWELS ARE MISSING ELSE
The thing is no one knows WHICH vowels are missing.
HOW MANY vowels are missing
or WHICH PART of The Name they're missing FROM
or "e" or "i" or "o" or "u"
IN THAT CASE ...
LET'S CALL HER.
"...YOOHWHOO."

*essay*

# Islam, My Islam

*In March of the year 633, less than a year after the death of the Prophet, the army of the first caliph crossed the boundaries of Iran. The leader of this army was Khalid benel Walid and he commanded eighteen thousand men. In Iraq he fought against the army of the Persian governor, Hormuzd. This so-called "chain battle" ended in a victory for Islam. In less than a year, half of Mesopotamia belonged to the caliphs.*

*The second Syrian campaign followed. Again Khalid led the army and vanquished the superior army of Byzantium at Jarmuk. The knowledge of this mighty victory reached Abu Bakr as he lay upon his deathbed. Abu Bakr had only ruled for two years and everything he had done was merely carrying out the plans and intentions of the Prophet. "Muhammad's shadow fell upon the earth through Abu Bakr," said the biographers of the latter. The only thing he did of his own accord was the creation of the form of the state and that, after all, was also in keeping with Muhammad's idea. Islam was to be an elective monarchy. Abu Bakr, knowing how to exclude Ali and his people, ordered that Omar, the most energetic of the Muslims, was to be his successor.*

*Omar was the St. Paul of Islam. He gave to the idea of a State of God definite outlines and far-reaching form. Finance, government, justice, all the elements which Muhammad had merely indicated, were created and developed by Omar. Surrounded by the* mohajirun *and the* ansar *in Medina, Omar ruled over a gigantic empire. His active past when he had been a smuggler, merchant and soldier was of great use to him now. He was versed in questions of government and he decided everything himself, even the smallest matter. He ruled for ten years, without rest or pause. His armies moved victoriously into the land of the unbelievers. At Kadissia, in the heart of Iraq, a decisive battle took place between Persia and Islam. The battle raged for three days. On the fourth night, "the night of woe," the Arabs won the upper hand. When they were about to pursue the Persians, one of the Muslims cut off the trunk of the Persian lead-elephant. The pain transported the animal into a frenzy and it charged the Persians and was followed by all the other elephants. A panic burst forth in the ranks of the Persian troops. Rustem, the regent of the Persian kingdom, was slain in battle and the tiger skin ornamented with diamonds, the imperial standard of Iran, fell into the hands of the victors.*

*The way to Persia lay open. The fires of Zoroaster burned for but a few years longer. The waves of Islam put them out. In the year 651, deserted by all, Jesdegerd III, the last emperor of Iran, fell at the hands of an assassin. "For us the Arabs were nothing but beggars and vagabonds. God willed that we were to know them as warriors," were supposedly his last words.*

*The victory of Islam over Syria and Palestine was even more rapid then that over Persia. It was only with great difficulty that the old Emperor Heraclius could defend the Holy Land of the Christians and the city of Jerusalem. The Muslims advanced on all sides. In the year 636, the sick and dying emperor left the Holy City. He carried the Holy Cross with him and no longer thought of rescue. Only a few years later, Omar, dressed in poor clothing and mounted on an old red-haired camel, and surrounded by victorious generals bedecked with gold, entered into Jerusalem. On his right rode the Patriarch of Jerusalem and Omar gave orders that he was to protect the Christians. As a matter of fact, not a single inhabitant of the city of Jerusalem was killed because of his faith.*

*When the crusaders vanquished the city centuries later, not a single Muslim, woman or child, was spared. A terrible blood bath crowned the victory of the crusaders. When Jerusalem had been conquered by Islam, Omar built a great mosque on the site of the old temple. This became the third holiest mosque in Islam.*

This, of course, is the Dome of the Rock, the *al-Aqsa* mosque which dominates Jerusalem's Temple

Mount and has done so since sixty years after the death of Muhammad. Noah Richler, in his review of Kana Makiya's novel, *The Rock* (Pantheon, 347 pages, $40 Canadian) ("Upon this rock he built his book," *National Post,* 3 January 2002) writes (without giving his sources): "The mosque was built over the ruins of Solomon's temple, razed by the Romans under Titus in AD 70. The site, an indication of Christian contempt for Jews at the time, was a garbage heap, one that had deliberately been allowed to accumulate for several hundred years. Ka'b [al Ahbar, a Jewish convert to Islam '…an authentic but little-known historical figure who accompanied the victorious Caliph Omar to Jerusalem from Medina,'] Makiya writes, was able to determine the exact location the Rock ['…the site of Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac, of Adam's landing in the world and of Muhammad's ascension from it; it is the place, in the mythologies of all three great religions, where Heaven and Earth meet…'] by finding the most injurious refuse of all, the place where women's menstrual rags had been discarded."

*The conquest of Egypt was equally rapid. Amr ben el Asi, the poet, diplomat, and satirist, advanced with four thousand men into the valley of the Nile. The population received him with shouts of joy for he brought them liberation from the sectarian conflicts and from the burden of taxes. Alexandria alone made an attempt at resistance. When Heraclius had died and the Byzantine court began to quarrel bitterly about his heir, the cunning Arabian poet was able to enter the brilliant capital of the great Alexander victoriously.*

*The conqueror of Alexandria, the proud Amr, sent long reports of the brilliance of his victory to the barbaric desert city of Medina. He wrote: "I have conquered a mighty city with twelve thousand amusement places and forty thousand Jews."*

*The vast amounts of gold and wealth which now poured in from all sides to the court of the caliph changed nothing in his patriarchal mode of living. Omar was not penurious. As a matter of fact he enabled the new aristocracy of Medina to enjoy an excellent and carefree existence. Pensions and grants were distributed among the faithful. The caliph himself was satisfied with the bare necessities of life. The puritanical teachings of Muhammad had taken root in his soul. So, for example, the only reason why he deposed the great warrior Khalid ben el Walid who had won many victories for Islam, was because he did not lead a moral life. When he heard that Saad, the conqueror of Persia, wished to build himself a castle at Kufa, he wrote to him: "I have heard that you wish to build a palace like those of Chosroes. Have you perhaps the intention of placing a guard at the doors of your palace so that the petitioners who come to you may be kept out?" When this letter was received, the palace was destroyed. If a general, who had just won some important siege, appeared bedecked with some of the precious jewels that were part of the conquered booty, the caliph would pick up a stone from the ground and throw it at the general in anger. Discipline, modesty and prayer were to be the virtues of the new State.*

*In politics, Omar applied the inflexible principle of* tadfil, *the pre-eminence of the pious* ansar *and* mohajirun *over the rest of the community of the faithful. Only those who had lived side by side with the Prophet were worthy of ruling the new State. Under the caliphate of Omar the widespread family of the* ansar *and the* mohajirun *became the government clique of the new State. Generals, prayer leaders and provincial governors came from their ranks, they received the major portion of the booty and they regarded the State of God as the sole domain of the auxiliaries of the messenger of God. Those in search of wealth and booty who had joined up with Muhammad, anyone who had participated in the desert pillaging under Muhammad's leadership, or those who had been wounded at Badr or Ohod, could now lead a parasitical life protected by pious memories.*

*God, wealth, and rewards of all sorts were the wages of the pious. The ancient ideas of the Arabian aristocracy were completely changed. The noble families of Mecca which had failed to join the Prophet at the proper time were ground into the dust. The community of the pious ruled over the gigantic state, over the wealth, and over the army. The believing Medinese looked with contempt at the newly-converted gentlemen of Mecca, the former enemies of Badr and Ohod. Apparently the power of Mecca had been crushed for all time. In addition, the pious of Medina had the greatest of advantages, they could choose the leader of the new State, the caliph, out of their own ranks. Slowly the members of the ruling caste of Medina were changed into parasites living on the State treasury. Only a few realized how great a responsibility rested upon their*

*shoulders upon the death of the Prophet. Most of them knew that they could now secure rich reward for the sacrifices they had once made. Omar was one of the few who continued to lead Islam along the way of the Prophet and to develop the idea which had once excited Muhammad.*

*When Omar became the victim of an attack by a Christian worker in 644, he did not name his successor but upheld the idea of an elective monarchy. Six of the oldest associates of the Prophet were to elect a new caliph out of their ranks.*

*The choice of the six wise men was not a happy one. They elected Osman, the son-in-law of the Prophet. Osman was old, pious, easily influenced and thoroughly unsuited for executive duties. However, he merits attention because it was due to him that the Koran was brought into its final shape. He collected the verses of the divine book and deleted much which the inhabitants of Medina would have liked to have preached as God's words. Many of his fellow citizens disliked him because of this.*

To say that the biographies of Muhammad are rife with understatement of this kind would be something of an understatement in itself. If true, this seems an admission that the Koran, after the death of Muhammad, suffered the same fate which many suras of the Koran level at the Jewish Torah—that the scriptures were "sold for a mean price." Or that, at the very least, the text is corrupt through significant omissions dictated by this singular figure in Islam's history. Presumably, deleting verses from a divinely-inspired work like the Koran goes far beyond the likes and dislikes of the citizenry of Medina. They "liked" various verses that Osman deleted and "disliked" him for doing so? Matching understatement with understatement: it will certainly be interesting to discover what Osman chose to excise of the Word of God when all is revealed on the Last Day.

*Old Osman was the tragic turning point of Islam. He too believed in the idea of a State of God, in the eternal equality of men, and in the governing of the puritanical, pious Republic of God by the pupils of the Prophet. And yet it is his fault that the State of God did not retain its original character for hundred of years.*

*Osman came from a fashionable house in Mecca. He was a blood relative of the Ommaya and, like the Prophet, loved Mecca, the city of his birth. And his love for Mecca culminated in his love for his ancient and noble family. When his reign began, more and more of his down-trodden, poor and disdained relatives came from Mecca to Medina. They were all pure, full-blooded Ommayas. The old man could not withstand the influence of his relatives and he believed them when they said that they were convinced Muslims.*

*Under the protection of Osman, the Ommaya once again dared to appear in public. They were sorry for their sins. The caliph could not help himself and appointed his nephews as governors of the provinces and gave them other political power. This meant his decline. The pious executive caste in Medina felt the ground slipping away from under them. The worst enemies of the Prophet, the sons of Hind, had come into power. The pious* mohajirun *and the* ansar *did not wish to share their rule over Islam with them. It was almost as bad as sliding back to heathendom that, only a few years after his death, the Prophet's bitterest enemies should have leading positions in Islam. A storm of indignation arose in Medina and destroyed the caliph.*

*When Osman had been elected it had been expected that he would make the usual speech of acceptance. Many people had come together in the mosque and respectfully made way for the venerable Osman as he went up to the pulpit. Osman remained there for half an hour, looked at the crowd and did not say a word. Finally the faithful became impatient and after prolonged hesitation, the feeble old man in the pulpit brought forth a daring sentence: "Every beginning is difficult." Much to the surprise of the crowds, he left the pulpit after having said these words, and went home.*

*It now appeared that not only the beginning was difficult for old Osman but that his end would be more so. One day a number of bedouins appeared before his house and reviled him because he had permitted the Ommaya to come into power. They then entered into his room and pressed him to abdicate. Although Osman was a weak person, he knew how to keep his dignity. Without paying any attention to the intruders he kept on reading in the Koran. Without any further ado he was murdered. The few Meccans who tried to defend him were forced to flee from the city.*

*The pious clique of Medina now gave the office of caliph to their worthiest representative, Ali, the cousin of the Prophet, the leader among the faithful. And so for the first and last time, the dream of the Hashim was fulfilled in Islam. A cousin of the Prophet received Muhammad's inheritance. Three times Ali had been prevented from ascending the throne but he had never ceased looking upon himself as the rightful heir. The caliphs, who had taken the throne from him, sought to indemnify him richly. His wealth was great and the more it grew the larger was the number of the followers who gathered around him. Now, when it was a question of safeguarding their power against the Meccan usurpers, the faithful crowded around him. In the provinces of the new empire where Ali had sent the most pious of the Medinese as governors, he was refused recognition. Aisha, the mother of the faithful, set out against him at the head of a large army. Civil war became an actuality in Islam. In a bloody conflict, known as the "battle of the camels," Ali came out victoriously over the rebels. Aisha was taken prisoner and brought to Medina with all honours.*

That's pretty much the extent of the detail you can find on Aisha's attempt to defeat Ali for the caliphate. Clearly, however, she had come a long way from the teenager who had lost her necklace in the sand.

*When Ali was ready to take over the office of the caliphate, a new name appeared on the horizon of Arabian politics. The name was that of Moawia ibn Abu Sofyan, the governor of Syria. Everything that the pious executive caste in Medina hated was personified in Moawia. He was a Meccan, and Ommaya, and the son of Abu Sofyan and Hind. It was only through Osman's weakness that he had secured a leading position in the government. His piety was more than questionable, and his hatred of the Medinese limitless. On the other hand, Moawia was a born aristocrat who was accustomed to rule as well as to the cunning of ruling. He incorporated in himself all the traits of the Koreish and was now reaching out his greedy hands toward the throne of the caliphate.*

*The courageous and pious Ali was not an equal match for him. Near Sifia on the Euphrates, Moawia met the army of the* ansar *and the* mohajirun. *The army of Ali was far superior to that of the insurgent. The battle lasted for three days and Ali was victorious. Thereupon the army of Moawia bound copies of the verses of the Koran to their lances and this evidence of piety was enough to bring the army of the pious to a halt. Ali did not dare to wage war against the word of God. He consented to negotiations and came out second best. On the great battlefield of Sifia the idea of the State of God was defeated through the trickery of an Ommaya.*

*Once more the idea of the Prophet attempted to oppose the sober world of politics. On the battlefield of Sifia, a party of the very holiest to whom the idea of a just State of God was sacred, separated itself from the army of Ali. "We wish to set out upon the path of God," they said, and they were known as Kharidjites, that is, the wanderers. In the turmoil of the civil war they were soon the only ones who retained the pure faith. In spirit and in deed they were the direct descendants of the Prophet.*

It is at this point that the text betrays itself as Sunni by nature, the centerpiece of which is always that being a direct descendant of the Prophet is invariably more a matter of spirit, self-declaration, piety and intent. As opposed to, you know, being an *actual descendant* of the Prophet. Don't take my word for it. See for yourself the blithe and remote disinterest with which the Sunni text deals with the subsequent demise of Muhammad's chosen successor, the one he called "my satrap, my vizier" ["satrap" from the Greek and Latin *satrapes*, literally "protector of the dominion" and "vizier" from the Arabic *wazir*, "a high executive officer in a country or Empire"]:

*On 21 January, 661, Caliph Ali fell at the hands of a fanatic. Without difficulty Moawia took over the caliphate, the leadership over the world of the hated Hashimites. It is one of the most ironic facts in history that it was the house of the Ommaya, the most bitter opponents of Muhammad, which drew the greatest amount of profit out of the work of the Prophet. For with the ascent of the Ommaya the caliphate became hereditary.*

*Three movements sought to save the idea of a free State of God. First it was the Kharidjites,*

*the noblest among the faithful, then the pious clique of Medina which was greedy for power, and finally, the direct heirs of the Prophet, the descendants of Ali. All three movements were drowned in blood by the first two caliphs of the Ommaya. The democratic puritans of Islam, the last representatives of the pure faith, the Kharidjites, fought fanatically. They were decisively opposed and finally almost completely annihilated. Only a few succeeded in preserving the idea which had led them on for future generations.*

*An equally tragic fate awaited the fellow-fighters of the Prophet. In the moment, when the army of the new caliph was approaching Medina, they regained their courage. Honourable old men,* mohajirun *and* ansar, *threw themselves into the fray with youthful ardour. Suddenly they all recalled the time when the Prophet led the battles in person. Rarely had anyone fought with such fanatical energy and hatred as at the gates of Medina. The old men had perhaps forgotten the art of living honourably but they did know how to die heroically. The steps of the great courtyard of the Prophet's mosque became more and more covered with the blood of the oldest friends of the messenger of God. Despite the heroic defence, the caliph was victorious. His riders used the mosque as a stable for their horses.*

Is it just me, or does it seem more than a little odd that a text written by a Muslim would deal so... *disinterestedly*...with the son of Muhammad's sworn enemy using the Prophet's Mosque as a stable? If that doesn't seem odd to you, then what about the short shrift which is given

*The grandchildren of the Prophet, the sons of Ali, Hasan and Hoŝain, also fell in the hopeless battle with the Ommaya. The host of the Alides was destroyed, the* schia Ali *the party of Ali was excluded from the throne for all time. However, they never desisted throughout the entire history of Islam to fight for their rights. Even today the name of Moawia or that of Jesid, his successor, is considered the worst possible curse on the lips of a pious shiite.*

And what about on the lips of a pious *Sunni* Muslim? Ŝ is the question that leaps to my mind. Here, it seems to me, is revealed that peculiarly bloodthirsty Arab capacity for maintaining loyalty to Islam and to the murderous Koreish simultaneously, reflecting—again—Osama bin Laden's bland assertion that "When people see a strong horse and a weak horse, by nature they will like the strong horse." While part of them aligns itself with Muhammad and with Islam—the "strong horse" which prevailed in his lifetime over the entirety of the Arabian Peninsula—even so does the unscrupulous and bloodthirsty Arab nature peek through, aligning *itself* with the son of Abu Sofyan and Hind, Moawia ibn Abu Sofyan who, in his turn, became the "strong horse" and the first Islamic/Koreish hereditary emperor, the caliph, whose life—and whose successors' lives—was filled with wealth, palaces, pompous ceremonies, feasts, orgies, wine and beautiful women as the Shadow of God on Earth, the Governor of the Messenger of God.

The really interesting thing, to me, is that for all practical purposes the history of Islam stops with the assumption of power of the Ommaya. Clearly, there are many stories to be told but the eradication of Ali and his sons and the usurping of their place by Moawia meant that there are really no further developments in Islam until the year 750 when the Ommayans were supplanted by the Abbasides—the descendants of Muhammad's uncle, El Abbas. You know, the one Muhammad found completely reprehensible and who had converted to Islam at the last possible moment before the fall of Mecca? Arguably, there were no significant developments even years later when Turkish tribes—whose leaders ultimately took the caliphate for themselves—forced their way into the Muslim empire. Nor were there any significant developments when the caliphate was taken away by the Mongols ("Chulagu, the Mongolian wolf of the steppes, conquered Baghdad, pulled the mantle of the Prophet from the shoulders of the caliph and trod the relic into the ground.") In this I see, again, God's sense of humour: If all that remained of the Islam which had been introduced into the Arabian Peninsula by God's Last Messenger and Seal of Prophets—besides the five pillars (acknowledgement of God's sovereignty and Muhammad's prophethood, prayer, the *zakat*, the *hajj*, fasting in the sacred month) and the Koran—was a taste for enormous piles of loot, rich surroundings, wine, women, song, brutal conquest, a vague ecumenical tolerance for Jews and Christians and a respect for libraries and universities, well (I picture God

saying) we hardly need a Jesus or a Muhammad to run the show, now do we? Hey, Muslims, have I got a caliph for you! His name is Genghis. Genghis? Show these nice Muslims how you do it in the *real* Orient! Nor were there any significant developments as the Turks fashioned themselves into the Ottoman empire and took the caliphate back from the Mongols. In fact, the only really significant event in the history of Islam—from the time that Moawia ascended the throne of the caliph and made it a hereditary position—in my view, was the *dissolution* of the caliphate by Mustapha Kemal, better known as Atatürk ("Father of the Turks") in 1924. To quote from a recent article by Alexander Rose:

> *Atatürk overthrew the pitiful remnants of the Caliph and Empire after the Great War and almost single-handedly designed, founded and governed a modern, secular state. When he had finished, there were few signs of religion left in Turkey that were not strictly supervised by his Ministry of Religious Affairs. The radical madrassas* [the same brand of Islamic religious schools which proved a breeding ground for the Taliban—"talib" literally *means* "students"] *were shut down, mullahs were subject to civil control and Islam was officially disestablished. As a result, and despite several impositions of martial law and the appearance of Islamic [political] parties, Turkey remains a secular, Western-minded democracy with a Muslim population. In fact it is the only such state in existence.*

As I've mentioned elsewhere, my interest in Islam—like my interest in Judaism and Christianity—is almost exclusively confined to its foundational sacred text. I have (at best) only a cursory interest in the histories of the three great monotheistic religions. I have read bits and pieces about Atatürk—it became one of those names that I kept running across for a week or so after reading Mr. Rose's article—but nothing particularly "in-depth". It does seem to me, however, that it might be worth a more thorough examination of how…*exactly*…Turkey was able to achieve the daunting task which now confronts much of Europe and (to a lesser extent) North America: the assimilation of a significant fundamentalist Islamic population into a modern secular state without jeopardizing or disenfranchising the unique Islamic character of that population or infringing on theirs or anyone else's basic freedoms. That is, if Turkey and 20th-century Turkish history aren't *dominating* discussions in the European Union (er—is Turkey even *in* the EU?) on what to do—and what *not* to do—to smooth cooperation between Brussels, the European governments and the Nation of Islam, then I think the EU is missing a good bet. But, then, it wouldn't be the first time, would it? Of course, it might also require a certain open-mindedness about Draconian measures if that was what was required and prove to be a non-starter in a largely leftist-liberal-socialistic world with a surpassing fondness for good omelets inextricably bound up with a pathological squeamishness about *ever! under any circumstances!* breaking an egg. A letter by George Gavlas in the *National Post* indicates that Atatürk's victory was "paid for by the British, French and Americans in exchange for oil exploration concessions…His victory included [the] slaughter of Christians, mostly Greek and Armenian, and expulsion of the rest. But the fact that both his victory and stay in power were funded from Christendom (the U.S. Secretary of State was on loan from and returned to Standard Oil) may have played a part in his secularizing of the government, much as the House of Saud pretends to keep a lid on it today." "It" referring to Wahabite Islam? The wholesale slaughter of religious groups—genocide—is not something I would include in the making of national "omelets"—or a viable means of accommodating Wahabite Islamic constituencies within that national "omelet". Leaving those courses of action entirely to one side, is there anything we can learn from Turkey? Hard for me to judge, since the only other lengthy article on Turkey that I have in front of me was written by Norman Stone of *The Spectator*—with a decidedly secular tone;

> *A notion has gone the rounds that Islam was persecuted in Turkey. Not so. Kemal Ataturk was very careful never to criticize it in public, though in his cups he apparently said that there was something wrong with a religion that allowed the pattern of the day to be dictated, down to the smallest details of personal hygiene, by a Bedouin from a millennium-and-a-half-earlier.*

Leaving aside that Muhammad was a Meccan and not a Bedouin:

> *He* [Ataturk] *did suppress the Muslim brotherhoods—the* tarikats*—on the grounds that they*

*were centres of obscurantism (all those women wrapped in black, like umbrellas); only one survived—the Mevievis, which was the least puritanical. It was against the law for clergymen of any denomination to appear in clerical garb in public, unless they were setting about their business, and even the papal nuncios dressed in suits.*

If by "setting about their business," Mr. Stone means "conducting actual religious services within the confines of a place of worship," then I think that's a particularly useful requirement, effectively eliminating the possibility of using the "mystique" of clerical garb to weigh in the balance in political street demonstrations and other non-religious activities.

Amir Taheri made a few very useful observations which, I believe, can assist in understanding how this problem of accommodating fundamentalist Islam has so few precedents to be used as guidelines:

*Islam represents the second largest religious community in the European Union and North America. This is a new situation in history. For the first time, large number of Muslims have voluntarily opted to live under non-Muslim rule. There is no historic model for co-existence between Muslims and non-Muslims in a society where Muslims do not hold exclusive political power (there are models for the reverse case, where non-Muslims lived under Muslim authority). Under Islamic law, travelling to lands not ruled by Muslims was forbidden* (haram) *except to ransom Muslim hostages. The reason is that lands ruled by non-Muslims are regarded as "House of War"* (Dar al Harb) *that must be fought until they submit to Muslim rule. Later, travelling for trade was allowed but still regarded as "reprehensible"* (makruh)

Short interpolation: Islam divides all human behaviours into *fardh* (mandatory, unavoidable), *sunna* (good, but optional), *mubach* (indifferent acts, bringing neither reward nor punishment) *makruh* (reprehensible, but not forbidden) and *haram* (sin, forbidden). When Islam was at its height one distinguished, as an example, whether the wearing of gold rings was *sunna* or *mubach* and when a copious meal ceased being *mubach* and became *makruh*.

*The current consensus among Muslim jurists is that Muslims can live in lands ruled by non-Muslims provided they use their presence to further the cause of Islam.*

*The Egyptian theologian Muhammad Ghazzali has put it this way: "Muslims can live under non-Muslim rule as long as they do not forget that they are Allah's missionaries, and, if needed, His soldiers." More radical Islamists go further. "I would rather die than settle in a Western state," bin Laden says. "It is a shame for Muslims to settle in non-Muslim societies and suffer that indignity unless they use their presence to further the cause of Islam and speed up the end of the infidel's rule."*

*In other words, Muslims may live in non-Muslim societies only as Islam's Fifth Column in the context for global domination.*

*All this, of course, leads to divided loyalties, theopolitical schizophrenia and ethical confusion. Thus the first task of Muslim communities in the West is to decide the terms under which they live in countries where they have chosen to settle. These terms cannot be agreed upon in a religious context. It is unlikely a majority of Westerners will convert to Islam any time soon, although there is no reason why peaceful attempts at persuading them should not continue. At the same time, the Ottoman system of* millah, *under which different religious communities could live under their respective separate laws, cannot be imposed in the west today. Terms can only be spelled out in a secular political context. Western societies are democracies where power belongs to the people, not to any divinity.*

This requires, to me, a hair-splitting disagreement with the secular Mr. Tahieri. The British Crown rules *Dei gratia Regina* (the initials D.G.R. on British Commonwealth coins) "By God's grace, Queen." The United States' pledge of allegiance includes the words "one nation, indivisible, *under God*, having liberty and justice for all". The American "In God we Trust" is displayed prominently on all U.S. currency (and is a Koranic phrase, by the way) and God is mentioned as having pre-eminent sovereignty in

both the American and Canadian constitutions (despite the best efforts of those fun-loving socialists, the NDP, to remove His name). The establishment of God's sovereignty over a democratic nation then allows all remaining power, all free will decisions, to reside in "We, the people" by God's implicit permission. To the doubtful among you, I'll point out that the instinctive American reaction to the horror of 11 September was to sing—spontaneously and *en masse*—"God Bless America" rather than the *official* national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner".

*Thus, the Muslim citizens of the Western states can, and to some extent already do, have a share of political power. Muslims in the West should accept democracy, not as an ideology but as a method of government, and regard secularism not as an enemy but as the chief guarantor of their rights as a minority. That would require an end to an ethic that, rather than being concerned with right and wrong, divides the world into Muslim and non-Muslim...Muslims in the West should clearly and unequivocally demarcate themselves from those who have reduced Islam to the level of an ideology in pursuit of political power. We in the Muslim world have a new word for them, "*mutuaslim," *which means "those who twist Islam for their own ends."*

Mr. Tahieri presents himself as almost too easy a target. From the standpoint of an Orthodox Muslim he is far more guilty of the charge than they are. It is he who desires to reduce Islam, the prescribed way of life "in the path of God" to a mere ideology submissive to secular political power. In those countries where Orthodox Muslims are in the minority, the majority is always going to supersede Muslim beliefs and aspirations simply by out-voting them. Since there is no precedent in Islam's 1400 year history for submitting itself to the dictates of the collective joint will of Muslims aligned with non-Muslims, it is Mr. Tahieri and those Muslims who share the secular Western sensibility to which he (self-evidently) leans who "twist Islam for their own ends." Personally? I share Mr. Tahieri's faith in democracy, so long as it is enacted under God's explicitly acknowledged sovereignty (knowing the malignant opposition this sentiment engenders, I suspect that God contents himself with even the most minimal of acknowledgements of that sovereignty: His name being retained in Canada's constitution) since I believe that democracy is the only political system under which each individual man's free will, his *God-given* free will, *remains* free—and because democracy will always progress on the side of individual's right to make free choices. As an example, I support a "woman's right to choose," even though I think abortion is self-evidently wrong. That is, I whole-heartedly endorse any man or any woman's fundamental human right to go to hell in the handcart of his or her own choosing.

*Western Islam should train its own imams (prayer leaders), rather than accept the employees of various despotic Muslim governments with their hidden agendas. Western Islam should also make a distinct contribution to developing Islam's canon law and culture in general. This is all the more imperative because the bulk of original research in all aspects of Islam, both as faith and as civilization, now takes place in the West. Rather than listening to semi-literate mullahs and muftis in Tehran, Cairo or Mecca, Western Islam must encourage and develop its scholarship and "export" a modern, humane and progressive narrative to the rest of the Muslim world.*

I think the mullahs and muftis of Tehran, Cairo and Mecca saw ample evidence with the Second Vatican Council—and the resulting convulsions within Christianity's largest traditional bastion—of what a great religion subjects itself to when the "New World tail" is allowed to wag the "Old World dog" in just the fashion Mr. Tahieri describes. Whatever problems I see in modern Islam (and I see no shortage of problems in modern Islam) I don't think the solution is to found in fashioning some variation on North American Muslims In Touch With Their Inner Child Saving the Gay Whales.

*Those Muslims who wish to demarcate themselves from the* mutuaslim *must stop contributing to bogus charities set up for terrorist purposes and forbid fundraising for them at their mosques and places of business and education.*

Some Hon. Members: "Hear, hear."

*Gender apartheid should be abandoned not only because it is wrong but also because such a move will demarcate them from the* mutuaslim. *Today women have virtually no presence in the leadership of Islamic societies and associations in the West. And this in spite of the fact that three Muslim countries have already had female prime ministers.*

On the contrary. I believe that capitulating to knee-jerk feminism would *define* them as *mutuaslim:* that is, as North American Muslims in Touch With Their Inner Child Who See Men and Women as Interchangeable Saving the Gay Whales.

*"And it is for the women to act as they (the husbands) act by them, in all fairness; but the men are a step above them."* (sura "The Cow" 2:228)

*"Men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God hath gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them."* (sura "Women" 4:38)

Which brings us to Wahabism.

The antithesis of the success of the Turkish experiment would have to be the 18th century Islamic innovation known as Wahabism, which has been described by reporter Isabel Vincent as a "harsh and puritanical subset of Sunni Islam that originated in Saudi Arabia. The sect is named for Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahab, a reformer whose descendants worked to unify the Saudi kingdom." According to Earle W. Waugh, a professor of religion at the Universify of Alberta, "Wahabism rejected other types of Islam and its reformist leaders imposed a puritanical order on the tribes they conquered. Unlike other Muslims, the Wahabis said they would base society strictly on the Koran." To whatever extent it was unlikely (in the extreme) that this might be achieved in the 18th century, it is (speaking as a frequent reader of the Koran) a complete impossibility in the 21st. There are just far too many developments in our civilization which were undreamt of in the 7th century, the time to which Wahabism seeks to return the Nation of Islam. To pretend that suras of the Koran directly address such disparate concepts as, say, trade unionism, in vitro fertilization, cloning, land expropriation by civil authorities, televised courtroom trials, et al is to, in my opinion, stretch the interpretation of religious texts to the breaking point and beyond—and places an unwarranted and disastrous level of power in the hands of those doing the interpreting, in my view, the inescapable problem and a recipe for implicit disaster in any theocratic government structure. It would be comparable to trying to run the state of Israel purely on the basis of the Law of Moses as outlined in the Torah—an approach to day-to-day living which has long been abandoned by all but the most devout, ultra-Orthodox Jews—or the Vatican attempting to ban Catholics from participating in any behaviour unless it is specifically stated in one or more of the Gospel accounts that Jesus had participated in the same behaviour. To be fair, the Koran is far more wide-ranging and specific in its guidelines and is (consequently) more open to the imposition of this kind of society-wide interpretation than is either the Torah or the Gospels, but, as I say, that degree is miniscule when measured against the myriad complexities of modern life. Since my own life far more closely resembles that of a Wahabite Muslim than it does a typical North American, I am not unsympathetic to the idealism which I believe underlies Wahabism. In a real sense, al-Wahab was the Martin Luther of Islam, restoring the purity of the original impulse of the faith and taking a resolute and courageous stand against the centuries of impurity with which Islam had become infected. Wahabism was, I'm sure—in the context of the 1700s—a breath of fresh air when compared with the decadent excesses into which the caliphate had undoubtedly degenerated by that time. Essad Bey's biography of Muhammad—which I have quoted so extensively in this series of articles—proved to be, in fact, a Wahab propagandist vehicle (albeit only in the last six pages), a fact which assumed greater significance only when I reread it after 11 September in preparation for writing these essays:

*Abd el Wahab declared war upon official Islam. He fought the sultan-caliph and the learned additions to and the lying alterations made upon the unique words of the Prophet. He believed in the Koran, held to the words of the Prophet and defended the pure, unspoiled, basic idea of Islam. At his side stood the dynasty of Ibn Saad* [Ibn Saud] *a noble Arabian family who created a Wahabite state in Nejd with Darija as its residence. The State of the Wahabites declared war on the ruler of the faithful, the Sultan of the Osmans* [the Ottomans]. *This declaration of war resembled that of Muhammad against the Emperor of Byzantium. A dwarf confronting a giant. After a few preliminary victories—the Wahabites even occupied Mecca for a time—the army of*

*the Turks became victorious and it had not been expected otherwise.*

This sort of revisionism really is mother's milk for Islamic demagogues. I'd be willing to bet that the victory of the Turks actually came as a very big surprise to all concerned on the Wahabite side of the conflict and that, up until the Turks prevailed, the Wahabites, seeing themselves as favoured by God, firmly expected to steamroll their opponents, no matter how many of them there were, echoing the military victories of the Prophet, Abu Bakr and, particularly, Omar.

*Ibn Saad was decapitated in Stambul* [Istanbul] *as a rebel and a heretic. But his heirs, together with the rest of the Wahabites, founded a small principality in Nejd in which the original, unchanged teachings of the Prophet were elevated to maxims of state. Of course no one in the world of Islam bothered about the State of the Wahabites, about their true teaching, and about the spirit of the Islamic basic ideas which they revived. For two hundred years nothing was heard of them except that they lived according to their teaching and maintained their community unimpaired.*

*When the world war was over, the caliph had been driven away and Islam had fallen into a faint, there suddenly and unexpectedly arose out of the deserts of Arabia, out of the distant er-Riad* [Riayd], *Abd el Asis ibn Saad, the master of the Wahabites, who called himself King of Nejd. No one knew who Ibn Saad was.*

*He is the only Muslim ruler in the world who has maintained the pure word of the Prophet, who has given it new life and new strength.*

I'm trying to keep these interpolations to a minimum but, since this is really one of the touchstones of this series of articles, I'm interrupting again. This is, from what I can see, a uniquely Arabic approach to religion. In 1936 (the copyright date of the book) it would be hard to imagine even the most radical, the most *extreme* Jewish or Christian partisan of any Jewish or Christian sect *daring* to describe a flesh-and-blood human being, a contemporary, as the "only Jewish figure in the world who has maintained the pure word of Moses" or "the only Christian ruler who has maintained the pure word of Jesus Christ". And yet this kind of demagoguery (a term I never use lightly) is commonplace in Islam. In fact, as the rest of this excerpt (I think) plainly shows, describing it as demagoguery actually verges on *understatement!*

*When Ibn Saad was still a boy, the dynasty to which he had belonged had been expelled out of er-Riad by the neighbouring race of the Raschid. Young Saad collected a troop of twenty men, travelled through the desert to er-Riad, stole his way into the palace of the Raschid, and slew the sleeping sultan and so regained the power over Nejd for himself and his tribe. With this act, his rise began which, in the course of time, made him ruler over two-thirds of Arabia, protector of the holy places and the most important man of present-day Islam.*

*Together with the faithful Wahabites he attacked Mecca, drove out the shereef, occupied the Kaaba in 1925 and became the most popular man in Islam. Today, Abd el Asis ibn Saad is the ruler of Hijaz, Assyria and Nejd. He is the religious and spiritual leader of the Arabs.*

*Ibn Saad repeated the deeds of the Prophet. He recalls God's words to mankind. And these words proved themselves to be sufficiently alive to create and rule a state in the twentieth century as they did in the seventh. Ibn Saad created a religio-social brotherhood called Ichwan. This Ichwan movement supports the Wahabite empire today. The teaching of Ichwan is pure Islam, just as the Prophet and the Kharidijites had preached it. Ibn Saad does nothing that the Prophet would not have done and fulfills all the duties which the Prophet fulfilled. Every luxury: music, theatre, coffee, even tobacco, are forbidden in the empire of the Wahabites. Every word of the Koran is law and the slightest misinterpretation is heresy. The equality of mankind in the eyes of God has been reintroduced practically. Monotheism is law. Adoration, even the veneration of the Kaaba, the holy stone, is forbidden to the Wahabites. The sober, straight, only way of truth, the way the Prophet trod, is known to them.*

*On this way Ichwan only knows of two things: prayer and exercise. Prayer and exercise, in which prayer is exercise and exercise is prayer, created the land of the Wahabites and gave life to*

*the dying body of Islam.*

*The incomparable thing about the ascetic teaching of Ichwan is that it knows no intolerance. This accounts for its all-embracing position in the world of Islam. Shiites, sunni, even Jews and Christians are tolerated by Ichwan.*

"Even Jews and Christians." As long as they don't play music, try starting a theatre, buying coffee or using tobacco. But apart from that? "No intolerance".

As I say, the book is copyrighted 1936. Evidently when God got an advance copy, He just couldn't resist indulging his omnipotent sense of humour. Two years later, the House of Saud struck oil beneath the desert sands of Saudi Arabia (the only country on God's green earth, so far as I know, which is named after one family), oil which, in time, would bring into the arid kingdom a tidal wave of wealth which would dwarf the totality of loot which had been accumulated by every caliph since Moawia. A snapshot of a number of members of the Saudi royal family—including Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz—is featured on the second page the *National Post* for 26 October 2001. I'm not sure how much *praying* Ibn Saad's descendants are doing these days, but I feel safe in saying that the "exercise" half of Ichwan went out the window a few years back.

It is exactly the total humourlessness of (let us call a spade a spade) *extremist* Islam that so invites its deflation through humour and I am sufficiently grounded in my secular North American background to succumb to the temptation (it's like shooting ducks in a barrel), even as my better nature (or what I regard as my better nature) recognizes (or believes that it recognizes) the sharper point concealed within God's little jape. "You are not an heir of Muhammad, nor an heir of Abu Bakr, nor an heir of Omar. If you were the heir of the Prophet and his companions which you purport yourself to be, you would—no matter how much wealth was generated by your oil reserves—be living as a pauper. You would wash and mend your own clothes and live in a humble dwelling passing your days 'striving in the path of God'. The mere *idea* of possessing anything beyond a few simple necessities would be abhorrent, anathematic to you. And you would give every penny of your indescribable wealth to the poor."

The oil revenues which have swamped the Saudi royal family in unimaginable wealth through most of the last century and which will, presumably, continue to swamp the Saudi royal family through most of this century have only further emphasized the disparity between the reality of their self-evident nature as (let us again call a spade a spade) thoroughly corrupt and venal human detritus and the portrayal of Ibn Saud as an heir of the Prophet Muhammad. Far from having used its wealth to alleviate the plight of the poor, Saudi Arabia continues to be one of the poorest countries on the face of the earth with much of its population living—quite unnecessarily—at or below a subsistence level (which probably, my Islamic side tells me, just makes them better Muslims). What is more, the money which the House of Saud *does* expend in Saudi Arabia and in the Arab world at large goes toward (again, calling a spade a spade) "buying off" and otherwise attempting to financially deflect, divert and distract the fundamentalist Wahabite sect which they were initially responsible for financing (rather like a peculiar "what if"—"What if the Koreish had chosen to *finance* Muhammad and Islam instead of fighting against them?"—acted out in the real world). The Taliban, as an example, was largely a creation of American tax dollars and Saudi oil money. On the American side, the Taliban was a puppet ally and a proxy army in the regional war against the Soviets. On the Saudi side, the Taliban and the madrassas schools which spawned them constituted an attempt to "relocate" ideologically extreme Muslims (Osama bin Laden was one such exile) to the more remote parts—and, as far as the manifold Saudi Princes were concerned, the more remote the better—of the Islamic world, in the hopes of alleviating the pressure those forces were bringing to bear on the corrupt and despotic Saudi regime (by then) straining to maintain the transparent fiction that it represented the living incarnation of pure, undiluted Islam while spending on hotel and restaurant gratuities what John D. Rockefeller used to make in an average week.

When God *does* tell a joke, I've noticed, it tends to get funnier and funnier and funnier as you go along. Of course, it depends on your sense of humour. It is estimated that 80% of the mosques in the United States are under the supervision of Wahabite imams, exported by the House of Saud. Wahabi mosques (according to one article I read) are recognizable because they are the most spectacular and ostentatious of the kind, financed as they invariably are by Saudi oil money. The levels of duplicity multiply. How could you pretend to be a genuine Wahabite imam—railing against all forms of base materialism—if you're leading prayers in an ostentatious mosque which the Prophet would have found pro-

foundly and irretrievably repellent? The anticipated endgame—the pre-ordained "punch-line"—of course, is: how long will it be before all of this catches up with Crown Prince Abdullah and the greed-mongers of his extended family? How many Wahabite genuinely ascetic Wahabite extremists—can you exile and how fast can you exile them? Particularly since 11 September has (to say the least) put something of a damper on the worldwide "demand" for extremist Muslim immigrants? How long can you distract even the average Muslim in your country from noticing that you have far, far, *far* more in common with Abu Sofyan and his wife Hind and the fat, smug Meccan merchants of the Koreish than with the Prophet and the *ansar* and the *mohajirun* of Medina? And how long can you keep them from, you know, *doing* something about it?

Of course it is somewhat inescapable at this point for anyone willing to open their eyes and look at the situation that the despotic corruption of the Koreish has very much prevailed in virtually all Muslim countries. Of all the free nations on the face of the earth (even Zimbabwe qualifies since there is at least the structural illusion of a democracy, which gives you an idea of how low the bar is set—Robert Mugabe can *step* over it) the Muslim world can boast of exactly zero members. All Muslim countries are run by fat, smug corrupt Meccan merchant-strongman types like Abu Sofyan. Complete and total dictatorships. What is even more repellent: every one of those venal, corrupt, merchant-strongmen, building palaces and monuments to his own ego, raking in piles of indescribable wealth while the population of his country starves beyond the gilded gates—Saddam Hussein, Bashar al-Assad, Muammar Gaddafi, King Mohammed—every one of them, I can practically guarantee you, sees himself as the One True Heir of the Mantle of the Prophet. Or, at the very least, as the successor to Abu Bakr or Omar. Or, at the point of greatest reduction, the latest incarnation of Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt and Syria who defended Acre against the Crusaders. This is, I believe, the principal reason that the Arab League and OPEC never really manage to agree on anything. Essentially, wherever the heads of state meet, it is a room full of Muhammad wannabe's: "Me! I'm the Heir to the Mantle of the Prophet! You must all follow me!" Each one proposes a different course of action, they all mouth platitudes about Arab and Muslim unity ("Me! Allah wants you all to unite and follow ME!") after which—as Jonathan Kay, editorials editor of the *National Post* so aptly put it in a sidebar piece about the last meeting of the Arab League—"the sheiks key each others' Rolls-Royces in the parking lot." ("If you will not follow me, you proto-infidel, then get a new paint-job!"). This is a point that I think often escapes the leaders of the world's democracies who keep waiting for *some* sort of consensus on *something*—*anything*—to emerge among the Arab nations, or at least, for some dominant faction to take shape. The Arabs—the Muslim world in toto—are also waiting for it to happen. Note the nature of Essad Bey's characterization of the career of Ibn Saad: "...his rise began which, in the course of time, made him ruler over two-thirds of Arabia, protector of the holy places and the most important man of present-day Islam." This is what the Nation of Islam is always waiting to see, in the same way that fundamentalist Christians awake every morning anticipating the Rapture, the sudden transfiguration of themselves into a pure spirit state before the Throne of God. Having, historically, experienced this exponential "rise" with Muhammad and Abu Bakr and Omar, and to a lesser extent with other Sultans and caliphs and leaders, Islam always anticipates the rise of a great leader, behind whom all Muslims will unite to finish the work of the Prophet in converting all the nations of the earth to Islam. And those most inclined to that belief, those for whom that brand of thinking is a centerpiece of their faith, are the Wahabites and their offshoots and variations. 80% of the imams supervising prayers in the United States are firm adherents of this brand of Islam. Every Muslim leader who comes to prominence in the world, potentially—in the faith of the Wahabite—could be The One. The revolution in Iran which brought Khomeini to power in 1979, made him a potential candidate as Heir of the Mantle of the Prophet. Apart from yet another costly war with Iraq, it never spilled beyond the borders of its homeland and with Khomeini's death the potential subsided and Iran is now vacillating between the residue of that revolutionary Wahabite spirit of 1979 and the westernization that most of the middle class now recognize as inevitable. Saddam Hussein attempted to make himself a prominent candidate for Heir of the Mantle of the Prophet (although Hussein would have to be considered the "least Islamic" of the Arab world's dictators-for-life, for the Saddam Husseins of this world, a brass ring is a brass ring: *carpe diem)* through technological military strength. Very much in line with Osama bin Laden's theory that people will always choose the strong horse over the weak horse, Hussein attempted to use his country's oil wealth to purchase "strong horse" status. His theory being, presumably, that if you have the most advanced armaments and the largest army in the Arab world, the gravi-

tational force of that weaponry will cause the rest of the Arab world to fall into line behind you and, *ipso facto,* the Muslim world will follow suit, drawing the Mantle of the Prophet to you. Another article by Alexander Rose in the *National Post,* 16 March of this year ("Iraq: How Big A Threat Is It?") contains an amazing shopping list of all of Iraq's known conventional armaments remaining after the Gulf War. The Gulf War, of course, was in many ways "make or break" for Saddam Hussein. If you are purporting yourself to be the Heir of the Mantle of the Prophet (or allowing your followers to proclaim you as such) or even attempting to engender the belief that you are the 20th century incarnation of Saladin, that you are a Mighty Slayer of the Jew and Christian Infidel, warfare with the Jew and Christian Infidel is where the rubber hits the road. Promising the "Mother of All Battles," a virtual Armageddon and then having the festivities over with in four or five days—with yourself as the "Mother of All Losers"—certainly diminishes the likelihood of your being popularly hailed as the Heir of the Mantle of the Prophet. As happened to the Taliban in Afghanistan, from a Muslim standpoint, the evidence is irrefutable that you are not The One they've been waiting for. Of course, the fact that Saddam was not deposed or killed mitigates the result (potentially anyway) in Muslim eyes. An argument could be made that the Gulf War echoed the result of the Battle of Mt. Ohod, where the Koreish had Muhammad and his followers on the run and then when all seemed lost—through a miracle of God—the Muslims were spared, living to fight the second battle of Badr, which they won decisively. This perception/possibility brings with it its own set of pressures and limitations. One of the insidious implications of the 20th century "arms race" (which evolved into the Arms Race) for a country the size of Iraq is that each successive "generation" of weaponry trumps the previous generation and the lifespan of a generation of weapons can be measured in years, if not months, at this point. Iraq's armaments are "state of the art"—for 1985. Which, by 2002 standards, means that they are dog-food. Ronald Reagan's simple solution to the problem posed by the Soviet Empire was to outspend them on weapons technology, which worked and was a leading factor in the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. What is often overlooked is that the United States chose not to rest on its laurels but continued to develop and manufacture successive generations of weapons technology. Essentially the Pentagon chose to trump itself...every other year? Every year? Every six months?...with successive generations of weapons systems so that the United States now effectively outguns every other nation on the planet by a very, very, very wide margin. That is, metaphorically, the United States has a .357 magnum and every other country is using sharpened sticks. The lesson for Saddam Hussein was that you have to *use* a state-of-the-art weapons system *while it is* state-of-the-art. A delay of a year or even six months from the time you take delivery on it means that it is only effective against smaller opponents. Unless, of course, God actually does favour Saddam Hussein over "The Great Satan" in which case David and Goliath rules apply. But as I've written earlier in this series, I don't think a theocracy or a socialist dictatorship is something God is going to side with against a vanguard democracy. I'll be dealing with what I see as the military responsibilities of the Western Democracies in "Why Canada Slept," which follows "Islam, My Islam."

Why *did* George Bush, Sr. and Colin Powell leave Saddam Hussein in power?

There is certainly no shortage of conventional explanations with twenty-twenty hindsight ten years later on. But most of those explanations have a hollow secular ring to them. From an Islamic standpoint a hollow secular ring to an explanation will always arouse the suspicion that the Hand of God is in evidence. This, it seems to me, is one of the great failings of the Western Democracies: their inability to perceive that victory over a Muslim opponent must be absolute and irrefutable. A *partial* victory over a pretender to the Mantle of the Prophet can easily be portrayed and then widely accepted as a *partial* defeat—with the attendant Muslim assumption that *total* defeat for the infidel is just around the corner. *Inshallah.* "If God wills".

This is no small point in my argument. As Jon Lee Anderson wrote in *The New Yorker* ("After the Revolution" January 28) regarding the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan:

> *The mausoleum that adjoins the Ahmed Shah mosque, which is across the street from the governor's palace, has a special subterranean chamber that* kafirs, *or unbelievers, cannot enter. It houses the cloak that is believed to have belonged to the Prophet Muhammad. On April 4, 1996, when Mullah Omar was declared the Keeper of the Faithful, he took the cloak out of the chamber and, in a dramatic display of hubris, donned it before a crowd of spectators.*

The use of the term "hubris"—"wanton arrogance arising from overbearing pride"—by Mr. Anderson in this context is very Western and, most particularly, very Christian (although the legions of secular humanists—in whose number I imagine Jon Lee Anderson, as a *New Yorker* contributor, counts himself—will deny with their dying breath having *any* relationship to Christianity, the spiritual bonds of two thousand years are not so readily broken by the wilful worldly conceits of the Baby Boom and the invention of pop-up toasters—much as the secular humanist Baby Boom world fervently wishes that wishing would make it so). The Christianity which is "hardwired" into the spiritual makeup of Mr. Anderson evinces the involuntary horror which surges to the surface at the prospect of anyone, at any level pretending to be a peer of the pre-eminent incarnation of a given faith, which, for Christians and those of Christian descent is Jesus. This, to me, was one of the primary motivations behind God's use of the Cross: it discourages (to say the least) the pretence of co-equivalence with Jesus. To those who sought to follow in Jesus' footsteps—in the way that Mullah Omar attempts to do with Muhammad: to assume The Mantle, to be popularly deemed as being on the same plateau, to be perceived as co-equivalent (like John and James' mother asking that they be seated on the right and left hand of Jesus in the world to come)—to any man so tempted, Jesus said, "…let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." The Cross is what separates the men from the boys. *Before* the Cross, Jesus' ministry—to his contemporaries—must have looked like a pretty cushy gig. Itinerant preacher, out on the road, hanging out with the guys, hundreds of people mobbing you wherever you go, a lot of them chicks, dazzling everyone with miracles, pissing off the Scribes and the Pharisees. Not all that different from being a 1st-century Palestine rock star. No wonder the disciples before the crucifixion were always bickering about—and *nudging* Jesus about—"who would be the greatest of them". As one of Robert Crumb's pseudo-spiritual scam artist characters put it, "*I'm* God. And *I* get all the chicks." But the Cross puts the story of Jesus on a plateau so elevated above those sorts of petty worldly conceits as to render those conceits beneath notice, to render them spiritually disgraceful, and to tread them into the dust. Not just at the time, but two thousand years later: spiritually, going willingly to the Cross puts you way, way, way, way, way up *there*. Anything less puts you way, way, way, way, way down *here*. It would be inconceivable (just to cite the most obvious direct analogy) for the Pope to appear on his balcony at the Vatican with the Shroud of Turin draped over his head.

This perception, this chasm between the Prophet and his would-be successors doesn't exist in Islam. Because the Prophet Muhammad died peacefully on Aisha's breast, having achieved the conquest of most of the world that he knew, there is no "Cross equivalent" in Islam, no solitary, agonizing "road less travelled," no Rubicon of faith and courage which one must needs traverse to establish one's spiritual *bona fides*. Islam is much like Second Temple Judaism in that respect. Before the Diaspora of 70 A.D. the Jews spent a great deal of time waiting and watching for Meschiach to come—the Davidic Messiah, the Branch of Jesse—who would restore Israel to the (let me go out on a limb here) *perceived* greatness of the Golden Age of King David and King Solomon. Like water, over time these things tend to seek their lowest level, and at the lowest level, Meschiach came to be perceived as "this really amazing Jew who will show up out of nowhere and unite everyone behind him and with the help of God and his Angels, kick every goy *tucchus* around the block without breaking a sweat…[this is the sensibility that I'm parodying with the Rabbi character. Superman, as conceived by Jerry Siegel, is very much cut from the "lowest common denominator" cloth of perceptions of what the nature of Meschiach would be]…so that we *Jews* get to be the ones on top and we *Jews* get to spit on any goy we want and we *Jews* get to be God and we *Jews* get all the chicks." I'm exaggerating, but only slightly as any decent history of Sabbatai Svi—the seventeenth century Jew who was popularly acclaimed to be the Meschiach for a year or so—would clearly demonstrate. When he made his presence known, word swept through the ghettos of Europe and masses of Jews sold all of their possessions and began migrating to the Holy Land, on the way out rather gleefully telling their goy oppressors, "Now! *Now* you are going to get *yours*, you goyim, you. Our guy, the *real* guy has come and he is going to give you *such* a smack!" Gradually, this sentiment seems to have departed from Orthodox and Reformed Judaism—the restoration of the Chosen People to Jerusalem after two thousand years having virtually eradicated it as a centerpiece of Judaic philosophy. In fact, so much does the Jerusalem restoration dominate the Jewish consciousness that popular rabbinical opinion of those verses of the Torah and passages in the Talmud which address the issue of the Meschiach (from what I understand) now favour the view that the Meschiach might be the city of Jerusalem *itself*. There also seems to be a large constituency that favours the view that Meschiach won't

be an *individual*, but rather a specific *Age* when all of the promises will be fulfilled by many individuals, all possessing different missing parts of the puzzle which is our earthly existence.

Again, these sorts of perceptions don't exist in Islam. In Islam, the Mantle of the Prophet has a very "up for grabs" quality about it. You can see this particularly in Arab street demonstrations which center on an individual. While it is going on, all of the participants appear to be both participating and observing. I'm sure that when Mullah Omar (who had appointed himself the title *Amir-ul-momineen*, King of all Believers) donned the ancient relic before the assembled crowd that a large demonstration ensued—large and *noisy*—with everyone chanting "Allahu Akhbar" ("God is Great"). On subsequent days did the demonstrations get larger and noisier? Did everyone seem to be abandoning Mullah Omar's rivals? Or were the rival factions still skulking at the periphery? When it comes to popular acclaim, Islam always has the *hajj* to compare it to: a period of a few days, annually, when millions of Muslims from around the world descend upon the sacred precincts. If anyone is ever going to be acknowledged to be the Heir to the Mantle of the Prophet, the "yardstick" against which his own followers will be measured and against which they will, undoubtedly, measure themselves will be the size and the enthusiasm of the crowds at the *hajj*. The crowds which surrounded the Ayatollah Khomeini after the Shah was deposed in 1979 and the crowds which assembled on the occasion of his funeral were the only ones in recent memory which seemed to achieve that level of size and enthusiasm and, in the Ayatollah's case, *frenzy*. Temporarily. And that part is, I think, key. The unwritten expectation would seem to dictate that the size and enthusiasm and *frenzy* of the crowds needs to get exponentially larger on an on-going basis. After all, whoever assumes the Mantle of the Prophet will be expected to conquer the entire world and convert every nation to Islam. Even as the Taliban positions were collapsing around him, Mullah Omar was issuing proclamations which were posted at a branch of the Foreign Ministry and all other government offices in his native language, Pashto: "You should strictly adopt the Islamic law of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, in every aspect of life, including dress, especially the turban. Wearing the turban crooked is not acceptable to the *sunnah* [laws on dress and demeanour]. For 1,400 years we have been wearing the beard and turbans. Some people say these are new things but it is not true." He maintained his absolutism—the final arbiter of such questions as: is it allowable in Islam to wear your turban crooked?—even as it became inescapable to even his most devoted followers that he was definitely not The One.

It is, in my view, well worth the effort for the Western democracies to keep close tabs on any and all of these individuals who come to prominence—and to be prepared to strike them, quickly and decisively, to demonstrate that this individual is *not* the Heir of the Mantle of the Prophet, this individual is *not* favoured by God. As was the case with Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar. They weren't killed or captured, but they were—visibly and irrevocably—*deposed*. That's all it takes.

Yasser Arafat has been a going concern in this category for years and years, in my view—dangerously so. The man has more lives than a cat which, in light of what I've been discussing here, is a perception that you really don't want attaching itself to a Muslim leader. It's a little peculiar and it certainly has no direct metaphorical precedent in Islam (although I always picture Muhammad's greasy, weaselly Uncle El Abbas as Yasser Arafat) still, the fact that Yasser Arafat always seems to land on his feet no matter what sort of peril he's in could, possibly, be misread by a people short on potential candidates for Heir of the Mantle of the Prophet. You'd really be scraping the bottom of the barrel, in my view, but the crowds which surrounded Arafat were always photogenically enthusiastic and Arafat, himself, was one of the first Muslim leaders to understand the value of manipulating the news media in creating and sustaining an image as a *potential* Heir to the Mantle of the Prophet. From the *National Post*, March 30:

> *In 1998, one of Mr. Arafat's subordinates submitted to the* Al Kuds *newspaper an article comparing the PA chairman to Saladin, the 12th century Muslim conqueror who took Jerusalem from the Christians. When the editor published the article on Page 3 instead of Page 1, Mr. Arafat's thugs kidnapped and beat him.*

As I say, it's just a very different world from that of the Judeo-Christian.

Pardon me? Oh, sure. By all means.

Let's talk about the Middle East.

From Mark Steyn's April 18 column in the *National Post:*

*"The Jews are a peculiar people: things permitted to other nations are forbidden to the Jews," wrote America's great longshoreman philosopher Eric Hoffer after the 1967 war. "Other nations drive out thousands, even millions of people and there is no refugee problem...But everyone insists that Israel must take back every single Arab...Other nations when victorious on the battlefield dictate peace terms. But when Israel is victorious it must sue for peace. Everyone expects the Jews to be the only real Christians in this world." Thus, the massive population displacements in Europe at the end of the Second World War are forever, but those in Palestine—a mere three years later—must be corrected and reversed. On the Continent, losing wars comes with a territorial price: The Germans aren't going to be back in Danzig any time soon. But, in the Middle East, no matter how often the Arabs attack Israel and lose, their claims to their lost territory manage to be both inviolable but endlessly transferable.*

*So even the so-called "two-state solution"* [Israel and "Palestine"] *subscribes to an Arafatist view of the situation. Creating yet another fetid Arab dictatorship in the West Bank would be, technically, a "three-state solution" and, indeed,* [would create] *a second Palestinian state* [next to the first,] *Jordan, whose population has always been majority Palestinian. It was created in the original "two-state settlement" 80 years ago, when the British partitioned their new Mandate of Palestine, carving off the western three-quarters into a territory called "Transjordan" and keeping the surviving eastern quarter under the name "Palestine." They did this for two reasons: First, they needed to stop one of the Hashemite boys, Abdullah, from marching on Syria and the best that they could come up with was to halt him in Amman and suggest he serve as interim governor; but secondly, Churchill, as Colonial Secretary, thought the fairest way to fulfill Britain's pledges to both Arabs and Jews during the Great War was by confining Zionists to a Jewish National Home west of the Jordan and creating a separate Arab entity in Palestine, east of the Jordan. The only thing he got wrong was the names: If instead of inventing the designation "Transjordan," if he'd just called the eastern territory "Palestine" and the west "Israel" (or "Judah"), the Arafatist claim would be a much tougher sell.*

This, it seems to me, expresses much of the problem in the Middle East very succinctly. When Arafat or his underlings—as official spokesmen for the Palestinian Authority—speak of the "occupied territories," what most of the world assumes they are referring to is the West Bank and Gaza, land seized in the 1967 war. I think the evidence indicates that this is a false assumption. I think Yasser Arafat actually believes that the fact that the land which is now called Israel was once called "Palestine" at the time of the British partition means that the state of Israel is, in itself, in toto, an illegal occupation of Palestine. I think Yasser Arafat further believes that if he is just patient enough, eventually, the United Nations—under sufficient pressure from the European Union and the Muslim bloc—will be forced to, basically, ask Israel to leave. And if Israel, the entire State of Israel, will not leave willingly, that they will be forced out militarily by the whole world uniting behind Yasser Arafat's claim. Crazy? Of course! But then, I also believe that Yasser Arafat is certifiably insane and always has been. How else to explain his rejection in 2000 of the creation of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and control of much of Jerusalem *unless that is just plain not what he is talking about?* Again, Mark Steyn, this time from his column of 4 April:

*Any time we talk about the "occupied territories," we're doing what the appeasers did in the Thirties—allowing the aggressors to frame the debate. They're not "occupied," they're "disputed territories." The West Bank isn't "Palestinian". The last people to administer it lawfully were the British. Under the 1947 UN partition plan, it was designated as "land yet to be allocated". The Jordanian Army, under the only decent Arab general (Sir John Glubb), seized it in the first Muslim war against the Jews and held it until 1967. But, in legal and historical terms, it's not Jordanian or Israeli and it's certainly not "Palestinian." Nor, I submit, should it ever be.*

*The interesting thing about "Palestinians" is that so few of the West Bank Arabs thought of themselves as such before 1967. It post-dates the founding of the PLO: Palestine had a national liberation movement before it had a nationality. Likewise, because the Arab League designated Yasser*

*Arafat as a head of state, we've spent 30 years trying to create a state for him to be head of. Most Arab nationalities—"Jordanian," "Iraqi"—were created by the British Colonial Office in the Twenties and, although those languid Etonians came up with some evocative and colourful names for their hastily concocted jurisdictions, for the most part they're comprehensive failures as nation states. It hardly seems worth adding another bogus polity to the list.*

Yes, exactly. As long as the Arab and Muslim worlds are wholly and completely dominated by Koreish-style dictatorships, it's foolish in the extreme to just carve another one out in the West Bank. The purpose of Western Democracies (although often you wouldn't know to look at it) is to assist in ending dictatorships and to assist in engendering democracy. The Palestinian Authority was formed with the express understanding that Yasser Arafat would serve as interim Chairman until Presidential elections could be held in 1999. 1999 was three years ago. An unsigned editorial under the title "Actually, the world is wrong" points up the ridiculousness of Europe's approach to the Middle East:

*Scenario: After rejecting Israel's offer of an independent Palestinian state, Yasser Arafat empties his jails of terrorists and initiates a campaign of occasional slaughter against civilians. Solution: To lessen Palestinian "frustration," Israel must begin a political process with Mr. Arafat immediately.*

*Scenario: Palestinian suicide bombers armed and financed by Iran, Iraq and Syria blow themselves up in restaurants and Passover Seders at the rate of one a day. Solution: To lessen Palestinian "humiliation," Israel must begin a political process with Mr. Arafat immediately. Also, Israel must take down "humiliating" anti-terrorist checkpoints.*

*Scenario: Israel conducts a largely successful military campaign in the West Bank and collects abundant evidence of Mr. Arafat's complicity in terrorism; meanwhile terrorist attacks against Jews continue, but at a much-reduced rate. Solution: To lessen Palestinian "despair," Israel must begin a political process with Mr. Arafat immediately. Israel must also end its military campaign and withdraw all its troops. Europe should threaten a trade boycott. Shimon Peres' 1994 Nobel Peace Prize should be taken away—and given to Mr. Arafat, so he has two.*

If you guessed that I am going to jump (like a rookie with a hanging fastball that snuck out over the middle of the plate) all over the use of such *emotion-based terminology* as "frustration," "humiliation" and "despair" to characterize the EU and the UN's view of the Palestinian Authority's situation, you guessed right. Next issue. But a few more facts, first:

As Norman Doidge pointed out in his column of 13 April:

*Spooked, America is unwilling to let Israel end Arafat's reign of terror. Washington has retreated into approaching him with a kind of primitive behaviour therapy that says, "If he renounces terror" or "if he controls terror," then we will talk to him. It is as though all that matters is to get him to say the right words, never mind his intentions; as if no distinction need be drawn between his strategic goal—the destruction of Israel—and a tactical willingness to say he opposes terror (when a lie serves his purpose).*

In everything that I have read about Yasser Arafat—and the clippings concerning him far outnumber all others in front of me as I work, here, on "Islam, My Islam"—the only instance that I can find of him denouncing violence is in his speech to the United Nations in 1988. As the record of the ensuing fourteen years more than amply demonstrates, this unique, solitary and isolated instance of Yasser Arafat paying lip service to peace has served him well, having (evidently) persuaded the predominantly liberal-left, quasi-socialist governments of the world to not only elevate him to his central rôle on the international stage as Israel's "partner for peace" but also to award him the Nobel Peace Prize. Seldom has so much been bestowed upon any individual for so little—particularly given that, in every other action and assertion over a forty-year career Arafat has never so much as *pretended* to be anything but what he is: a gangster, a terrorist, the inventor of airplane high-jacking as a means of winning public attention, the former leader of Black September who masterminded the murder of the Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics and the 1973 murder of American Ambassador Cleo A. Noel, Jr., his deputy, George Curtis Moore and Belgian chargé d'affaires, Guy Eid during a hostage taking at a reception at the Saudi embassy in Sudan (this one

isn't discussed very much: the commandos demanded the release of Robert Kennedy's assassin Sirhan Sirhan and executed the hostages when President Nixon refused to negotiate) and, today, the autocratic dictator of the Palestinian Authority. It is a peculiarity of the secular liberal-left, quasi-socialists who dominate the world stage that they have an insatiable need to establish co-equivalency, most particularly where it does not exist. Israelis—having, some time ago, abandoned liberal-left, quasi-socialist fictions for the rather more useful pragmatism of common sense and its ability to assist in survival—thus require a counterpart (in the skewed perceptions of the secular, liberal-left, quasi-socialists) in what they call (with perfectly straight faces) "the peace process": a counterpart, well, you know, a little more secular, liberal-left and quasi-socialist than the Israelis. Of course it is only the secular, liberal-left quasi-socialists who can then look at Yasser Arafat—a devout Muslim, whose politics (like the politics of all autocratic dictators) lies somewhere to the right of Francisco Franco, whose idea of socialism includes only himself and his immediate cronies—and say, "Yes, well, close enough." The *Alice Through the Looking-Glass* quality that this imposes on the Israelis as a central reality of their national existence, quite frankly, boggles my mind as I'm quite sure that it boggles theirs on a regular basis. It is worth recalling—as the secular, liberal-left quasi-socialists are loathe to do—that the problems of the Palestinians originated with the Arabs, not the Israelis. As Z. David Berlin puts it in an opinion piece in the *National Post* ("Would confederation offer a middle way for the Middle East?" 11 May) (the long answer to the question posed by the title, to me, is "no".):

> *Palestinian nationalism grew not so much out of the 1967 Israeli occupation as because pan-Arabism itself turned out to be not very inclusive. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the displacement of local populations that went with it...*

I really have to interrupt at this point to mention that the population "displacements" were scarcely comparable. Basically, the Arab countries seized all property owned by their Jewish citizens and then expelled the Jews—who fled to Israel—and then advised the Arab populations in Israel, the Transjordanians, to get out of the way while they, the Arab countries, kicked Israel's ass, with the implicit promise that once Israel's ass had been properly kicked and all of the Jews driven into the Mediterranean, there would be more than enough fig trees, vineyards and other loot to go around for all the Transjordanians who had been inconvenienced. When *Israel,* instead, kicked the *Arabs'* asses, the Arab countries (Jordan particularly)—rather than opening their borders to the now-homeless Transjordanians—erected the refugee camps which still exist today and said, basically, Sit tight. We'll get 'em next time. Which of course they didn't. So for fifty-four years, these Transjordanians have been "sitting tight" in increasingly more permanent—fifty-four years *is* fifty-four years—refugee camps in the West Bank. It's also worth noting that most Arabs living today in the West Bank (or Gaza) did not get kicked out by Israel. They moved in—from Jordan, Egypt and, indirectly, every other Arab country you can name. Since 1994, more than 400,000 Arabs have entered the West Bank and Gaza.

> *...did not inspire anything like the current frenzy. In fact, it was not until Black September, when the late King Hussein of Jordan clamped down on the Palestinians in his own country (about 70% of Jordan's population is Palestinian) that Palestinians began to realize their survival was of no great concern to the neighbouring Arab nations. This growing feeling of abandonment and helplessness was further exacerbated in June, 1976, when the Syrian ruler, Hafez Assad, launched a major offensive against the Palestinians hunkered down in Lebanon...Displaced Arab populations in refugee camps under Egyptian and Jordanian rule, often referred to as Arab Jews, became Palestinian by default.*

Essentially, Jordan—which was created largely to *be* a homeland for Palestinians—decided it had enough Palestinians of its own (thank you, very much) and decided to freeze out the Arabs that they had encouraged to abandon their homes and lands temporarily, *fifty-four years ago.* In the minds of the Jordanians, it was one thing to promise those displaced Arabs *Jewish* fig trees and vineyards and houses and lands and quite another to have to make good on the promise with *Jordanian* fig trees and vineyards and houses and lands (this brings to mind an observation that David Warren of *The Ottawa Citizen* quoted in a recent column as having been said to him by a Palestinian writer in Bethlehem, "With friends like these, who needs Israelis?") Actually, Shimon Peres (presently Israeli defence minister, the Prime Minister

who shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Arafat) came up with a plan in his 1995 book *The New Middle East* of a trilateral confederation of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians with the state of Palestine to be established in the Gaza Strip and the joint administration of the West Bank by Israel, the PA and Jordan:

> *One story going the rounds at the time was that Arafat had approached King Hussein with the joint project idea, suggesting that he and the King alternate as heads of the confederation. According to Peres, this chutzpah "put an end to the idea of a Palestinian Jordanian confederation."*

No doubt. This is what continually amazes me about the secular liberal-left, quasi-socialist approach to the "peace process". As I see it, *Jordan* owes the displaced Arabs a homeland. Call it Little Jordan, call it Palestine, rename Jordan Big Palestine if you want but I really fail to see where autonomy or a new state comes into the deal. What role will Arafat play? My personal opinion is that the vital role that Arafat will play in Middle East peace is this: you take Arafat out in the woods and you put a bullet in his head and leave him there so the birds and the wild animals can pick his carcass clean (call me sentimental if you want, but these are exactly the warm fuzzy kinds of thoughts that come to my mind. And it's not just Arafat. I have the exact same thoughts about all other scumbag, terrorist, sky-jacking, athlete-murdering, diplomat-murdering, autocratic dictator despots). Once Yasser Arafat has fulfilled this vital role *then* you sit down and begin to negotiate with the Jordanians what part of Jordan the Jordanians are going to carve out of Jordan as a new homeland for the Transjordanians that Jordan encouraged to leave their homes back in 1948.

But, but—what about "Land for Peace"? I hear you whine (you secular, left-liberal, quasi-socialist, you). The answer to that, of course, is the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in May of 2000. As Charles Krauthammer of the Washington Post Writers Group puts it,

> *Indeed, Israel had been in Lebanon for about 20 years. It was a classic defensive occupation. Israel laid claim to not an inch of Lebanese soil. It diverted not a drop of water. It had no interest in staying. It was there for one reason: to protect Israel's northern frontier from various guerrillas—first Yasser Arafat's PLO, then the Lebanese Shiite Party of God (Hezbollah)* [a front for the despotic terrorist government of Syria]*—using South Lebanon to attack Israel.*
>
> *Yet for two decades, Israel was hectored to comply with United Nations resolutions demanding Israel's withdrawal. In May, 2000 it complied. To ensure that there could be no possible residual territorial dispute, Israel asked the UN to draw the line demarcating the true Israeli-Lebanese border—the so-called Blue Line—then pulled back behind it.*

Land for peace, right? Wrong. Since May of 2000, Hezbollah's attacks on the northern frontier of Israel have escalated to a level which exceeds that which prompted the Israeli invasion back in 1982. In fact, do you remember the Saudi Peace Plan that everyone was making such a fuss about a few months back? One of the key points of Prince Abdullah's plan was a demand that Israel withdraw "from the remaining occupied Lebanese territories." But, (as even the ordinarily sedate Mr. Krauthammer couldn't help but italicize) *there are no remaining occupied Lebanese territories.*

At the time of Colin Powell's latest swing through the Middle East, Steven Edwards had a few astute observations buried in an otherwise unexceptional article headlined "Arabs Keep Up Diplomatic Pressure." Foremost among these a couple of quotes from unnamed UN diplomats. The first, a Western diplomat, saying, "It seems like the Arab countries can't go 24 hours without putting something on the table." Followed by an observation from unnamed Arab diplomats that much of their activity is to appease Arab public opinion, "The push for more and more resolutions is for domestic consumption. It is a way of showing something is being done. And there is always the chance that the Security Council will fall to its knees and move against Israel." "Fall to its knees". A singularly Koreish-like approach to international diplomacy.

> *Pushed primarily by Arab and Muslim countries, the United Nations has spent more of the past 50 years on the Arab-Israeli conflict than on any other regional dispute.*
>
> *The Security Council has ruled on the conflict in more than 250 resolutions, which are legally binding. The count for the General Assembly, where Arab and Muslim countries have little diffi-*

*culty mustering support among developing countries for the Palestinian cause, is almost 1,000.*

I love this part:

*Pushing for resolutions, declarations and statements that slam or make demands on Israel and corner the United States has been the mainstay of Arab diplomatic activity through the vast UN system for years.*

*This week in Madrid, even the United Nations world conference on ageing found itself sidetracked when Egypt insisted delegates should accuse Israel of "genocide, subjugation and the daily agony that the Palestinians incur."*

I suppose when you're busily typing all of these resolutions into your laptop, a Freudian slip or two is bound to slip in. "Incur" means "to bring on oneself". I think the writer meant "endure". Anyway, I think it's obvious that the dispute isn't really *about* anything anymore apart from making Israel into a scapegoat for the massive failures clearly evident in the Arab dictatorships in the Middle East. There is no concession which Israel could make that would end the violence perpetrated against it—or, for that matter, even curtail the mindlessly lunatic propaganda war being waged against it on a daily basis. As Prince Abdullah said when he unveiled the Saudi "peace plan" at the last meeting of the Arab League, "The time has come for Israel to put its trust in peace after it has gambled on war for decades without success." Of course, this is the exact reverse of the reality of the last fifty-four years. It is the Arab countries, the Arab dictatorships which have gambled on war for decades and the Arab countries, the Arab dictatorships who have no success to show for their efforts. As Mark Steyn pointed out in a recent column, "Prince Abdullah has no interest in Palestinians: It's easier for a Palestinian to emigrate to Toronto and become a subject of the Queen than to emigrate to Riyadh and become a subject of King Fahd." It's a telling point. The Saudi Peace Plan was basically the same as one the Saudis proposed in 1981 and again in 1991: withdraw to the pre-June 4, 1967 borders and the Arab world will make peace with you. What this presupposes is that the venal and corrupt Arab despots in their various palaces have any influence over their fanatical anti-Zionist, Wahabite minority populations. I don't think that they do, any more than Yasser Arafat could actually stop a single suicide bombing even if he were inclined to do so.

Right. Getting back to Yasser Arafat:

In the same way that the secular left-liberal quasi-socialists use Hemingway's Nobel Prize for Literature to convince themselves that Hemingway was a writer instead of a typist, this same group uses Yasser Arafat's Nobel Peace Prize to convince themselves that Arafat is a diplomat and a statesman. Even as the evidence continues to mount and to become irrefutable—that not only has Arafat been "inconsistent in his opposition to terrorism" (the official view of the White House and the State Department)—that he has, in fact, been a relentless *proponent* and *supporter* of terrorism still *The Washington Post* (immediately after the massacre of 26 Israelis at the Passover Seder) editorialized that we need "the leadership of the Palestinian Authority as well as its principal security services" as "the only available instruments for stopping Palestinian terrorism". Charles Krauthammer's reaction:

*Good God. Instruments for stopping terrorism? They are instruments for aiding and abetting, equipping and financing, supporting and glorifying terrorism, which they call "martyrdom operations". This is like arguing at the beginning of the Afghan war that we should not attack the Taliban because they were the only instrument in Afghanistan available for bringing al-Qaeda to heel. Sure. But they were allied with al-Qaeda, commingled with al-Qaeda and shared al-Qaeda's objectives. They had no intention of ever stopping al-Qaeda. That situation is precisely the same in Palestine.*

*Next issue: Getting very near the end (God willing). More on the Middle East and future prospects for the Nation of Islam.*

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